

INTERNATIONAL
Women's Day



A LAREDO MORNING TIMES PUBLICATION

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Letter from the Editor

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Dear Readers,
We would like to thank the women who participated in our International Women's Day Section – Kimberly Tijerina, Doreen Hale, Gabriela Morales, Dr. Sylvia Rios and Melissa Huddleston.

IWD is March 8, and the theme is this: Imagine a gender equal world. A world free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination. A world that's diverse, equitable, and inclusive. A world where difference is valued and celebrated. Together we can forge women's equality. Collectively we can all #BreakTheBias.

The local women who took time to ponder the questions we presented were sincere and forthright with their answers – a good starting point for us to truly imagine a gender equal world.

They are role models not just for women but for everyone. They have broken barriers, worked hard and achieved what may have seemed like unattainable goals. Please read their answers. And please learn from them. They offer a lot of wisdom.

Sincerely,
Valerie Godines
Special Sections Editor



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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Doreen Hale

L A R E D O I N D E P E N D E N T S C H O O L D I S T R I C T P O L I C E C H I E F

Tell us about your current professional position and how did you get there?

Ever since I can remember I have wanted to be in Law Enforcement. I grew up in what some of us know to be a "police family." My father was a police officer at the Laredo Police Department for 5 years before he was hired as the Chief Investigator for the District Attorney's Office

for 45 years until he retired. Many of my uncles and cousins are law enforcement officers and so it felt natural to me to pursue that profession. While employed at the Webb County Sheriffs' Office, as a civilian, I attended the Regional Police Academy at Laredo College. And after 16 weeks of academic and tactical police training I was commissioned as a Texas Peace Officer. Upon graduation

I performed my field training as a Patrol Officer. I was subsequently transferred into the criminal investigations division—an aspect of law enforcement that interested me and that I always knew I would one day pursue. In fact, it was an easy choice for me because growing up I got to listen to my dad's stories and his stories were always fascinating to hear. Eventually, I was promoted

to the rank of Sergeant Investigator within the same Investigation Unit. After several years as an investigator I was afforded an opportunity to serve as the court bailiff for District Court Judge Beckie Palomo. I was fortunate to work as a court bailiff for approximately 7 years until my retirement from Webb County. After leaving my position as bailiff, I was hired as an

Internal Affairs Investigator at the Laredo Independent School District (LISD). The position of Chief of Police became available a couple of years later and here I am today. I am proud to be the Chief of Police for LISD because it is where I went to school. I consider it a blessing being in a position where I am able to give back to the same school district where I received my early education.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's day this year calls for us to imagine a gender equal world. How does that look to you?

In my opinion it is important for everybody to be involved in the fight for gender equality. Regardless of gender, we all have a potential to make positive changes in the world around us. The experiences and knowledge that each person possesses are important to make it, and keep it, a world where we would all love to live. We must remember that we need to make all these positive changes for the betterment of our society so that future generations can proudly enjoy living in a free and equal world.

Have you experienced or noticed bias, stereotypes or discrimination as you rose to your current job?

Unfortunately, I would have to say "YES" without a doubt. I believe I bring a unique perspective to this question. When I was young it was rare to hear about a female police officer much less see one in person. Growing up as the daughter of a policeman I was able to see that for myself. I met many people in law enforcement that worked with my father and I never knew of a policewoman working with him until many years later. When I decided to go to the Police Academy there were only a handful of females, and this was 30 years after my father started as a police officer. Throughout my career I have experienced discrimination. I often felt resentment from my male counterparts. In my unique experience, I have had to overcome the misconceptions of people who believed I was only there because of my



First female police chief Doreen Hale's badge is pinned on by her father, O.J. Hale Sr., after she takes the Oath of Office as LISD's new police chief. (Christian Alejandro Ocampo /Laredo Morning Times)

political affiliations from my family. Unfairly, I had to work three times harder than my male colleagues to prove that I was in my position due to my abilities and because of "what" I knew not because of "who" I knew. As a female officer I learned to overcome all the challenges of not only being a female in a predominately male profession but showing all the naysayers who doubted my capabilities that I was more than capable to not only perform but to succeed in a law enforcement career. I thank God every day for allowing me to have some of the most amazing parents, siblings and friends who have all in some way helped me and guided me throughout my professional

advancement.

What advice would you offer younger women who are starting out their career paths when it comes to fighting discrimination?

The one thing I believe is important to say here is "embrace your own leadership skills and have zero tolerance when it comes to any kind of abuse or harassment." And "never doubt yourself, never doubt your abilities, always believe in yourself-worth and in what you know you can bring to the table." As a woman, always be prepared to work harder so that you one day undoubtedly achieve your dreams and goals. I am very proud to be the first female in our community to shatter the glass ceiling in the

law enforcement profession but I know that there are always higher ceilings and for those females coming into the profession behind me I hope to leave an excellent legacy as a female leader—an impression of excellent police work, devotion to duty, and courage and commitment to the community. I have so much on my "to do list" so I ask the community for your prayers as I lead an amazing group of people to make our schools safer for our students and faculty at LISD. I have only the best intentions for our LISD FAMILY.

What are some typical stereotypes that women face and how do we fight them?

Stereotype – Women do

not have the skill sets that are required for certain jobs. This is one of the oldest stereotypes but in my opinion it is one that can be changed if we all do our small part. What should a woman do if this happens to them? First of all, they should focus on the things that they can control such as the duties and responsibilities of the job itself. They should strive to learn everything about their profession, and specifically their position, because as we all know: knowledge is power. Sadly, we also have to accept the fact that there will always be ignorant people who, due to inherent biases, will wrongly stereotype others—together we can overcome this ignorance by simply educating and refuting.



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Chief Doreen Hale

You make us so proud and we love you very much!

———— Mom and Dad ————

Laredo ISD Superintendent Dr. Sylvia G. Rios & LISD Police Chief Doreen C. Hale

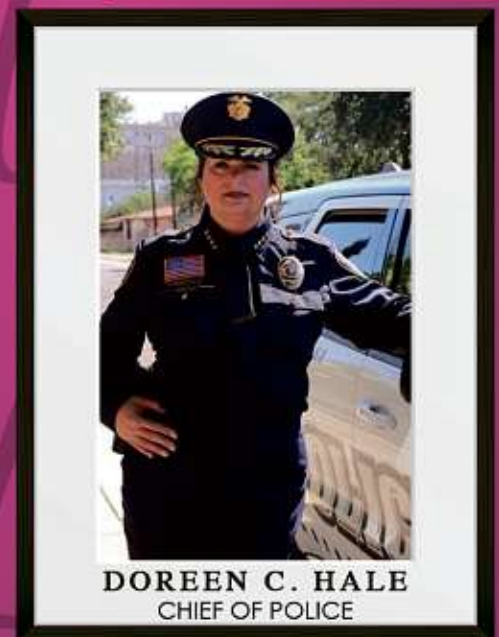
MAKING A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY



Laredo ISD advances and celebrates the visibility and achievements of women in its District and school community. LISD also honors the trailblazing women and girls who have built our country, shaped our progress, and strengthened our character as a democracy.

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LISD Superintendent Dr. Sylvia G. Rios and LISD Police Chief Doreen C. Hale motivate youngsters to reach their potential by graduating from high school, continuing with higher education, starting a career, or serving in the military.



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Thank You

To all the women in our community for being recognized for your leadership!

Dr. Sylvia Rios (*LISD Superintendent*)

Chief Doreen Hale (*LISD Police Chief*)

Gabriela Morales (*Chamber of Commerce*)

Melissa Huddleston (*LMCA*)

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Dr. Sylvia G. Rios

L A R E D O I S D S U P E R I N T E N D E N T O F S C H O O L S

Tell us about your current professional position and how did you get there?

Over the course of 45 years, I have been enriched by the many roles in which I served as a high school teacher, principal, curriculum and instruction director, Region One Education Service Center Director and Curriculum Administrator, LISD Chief Academic Officer and LISD Superintendent of Schools. I am a graduate of Texas A&I University in Kingsville, TX, with a bachelor's degree in Secondary English and Mathematics and a Masters in School Administration. Earning a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Texas A&M College Station in 2012 gave me the opportunity to work with many more educators across Texas.

International Women's Day this year calls for us to imagine a gender equal world. How does that look to you?

A gender equal world would acknowledge, respect, and support the individuality of all who live and work within its boundaries while nurturing the collective unity of building a collaborative society. While men and women may play different roles in our society, I firmly believe that all are entitled to seek career opportunities which embrace equity and allow for movement towards personal

ABOUT LAREDO ISD

The Laredo Independent School District was established in 1882. LISD is a district sprawling more than 13 square miles. The Laredo Independent School District is made up of 33 educational institutions: 20 elementary schools, four middle schools, and three comprehensive high schools

and professional goals. Such a position guarantees that the work of individuals is measured by the outcomes aligned to the degree of responsibilities of that said position, not by the assumptions of gender bias or the higher standards of performance sometimes tied to gender rather than ability. A gender equal world would assume equal pay and benefits for equal responsibilities. This would also be the same in terms of expectations and equal opportunity when applying for a position or working alongside colleagues.

Have you experienced or noticed bias, stereotypes or discrimination as you rose to your current job?

There have certainly been occasions throughout my 45-year career when I have experienced some form of bias or discriminatory behaviors associated with stereotyping. However, while it has not always been an easy journey,



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I have worked steadily to dispel any misconceptions or doubts about my leadership competencies as a woman, especially in roles typically held by males.

As a woman born in the 1950's, I was schooled in the norms for gender appropriate behavior and demeanor as well as defining which career choices would be relevant to women. This is what you should wear, how you should wear it, how you should speak to others especially those in authority, which careers you should prepare for and seek, what your work should say about you, and what your attitude should be when denied an opportunity--all had a place in my career toolkit. Throughout my life, I have learned that my work and actions need to speak loudly for me as a precedent to any endeavor that I undertake. With this being said, preparation as well as confidence are key components in fighting gender bias.

Growing up in Hebbbronville, my teachers, along with my parents, were the role models who opened the doors to the world for me. Their modeling of perseverance and the belief that we could always achieve our goals if we just committed ourselves to hard work and exemplary performance were what have always inspired and driven me towards the work that I do now.

With this being said, I am blessed to have been selected to my current position as LISD Superintendent of Schools because of the steadfast commitment of our Board of Trustees and those with whom I work to the vision of success

that we share for our students. Working together, we have taken LISD to new heights, earning eight nationally recognized Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools over the last five years.

What advice would you offer younger women who are starting out on their career paths when it comes to fighting discrimination?

Dare to be bold AND prepared. Understand that the world in which we live will not automatically change because we simply want it to or because we believe we are entitled. Our experiences and education may serve as the premise from where we can start, but change definitely requires a plan, hard work, and optimism. Prepare yourself with the skills that are directly associated with your career goals. Aim for exceptionalism, and then use your voice to advocate for yourself.

When applying for my current position, several of my colleagues commented that I was exceptional when it came to designing and applying curriculum standards. Yet, the implication was there that I was only prepared for that one role. That day, I went home and talked to myself, weighing the pros and cons to my skills and aspirations. The next day, I decided to apply and make it known that I, too, was just as qualified as any other candidate and ready for the challenges of the position that I now hold.

What are some typical stereotypes that women face and how do we fight them?

Women are often made to feel or believe that they are weak and not able to handle demanding



or complex situations. They are also associated with making decisions based only on emotions rather than through the application of logic. Thus, they are expected to crumble and retreat to tears when faced with difficult decisions. As child bearers and nurturers, women are most often not expected to handle a career as well as a personal life.

Granted, personal sacrifices are often required of both

genders, especially in dealing with all of the challenges posed by today's societal demands. As women, we have to learn how to handle a multitude of roles—sister, daughter, mother, wife, leader, nurturer, partner, negotiator, ally, nurse, teacher, role model, etc. Our ability to multi-task is not something that is new to the world or to the society in which we live today.

Competing in such an

environment may not always seem fair, but learning how to support and advocate for each other as women is the first step in changing mindsets. While education is another rung in the ladder of equity for all, learning how to lead and working with others in collaborative partnerships creates opportunities for all who wish to make a difference in the lives of those entrusted to our care.



CELEBRATING International Women's Day

Tuesday, March 8



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Languages: English, Urdu, Punjabi



Patricia Leal, WHNP-BC
Board-certified Women's Health Nurse Practitioner

On this special day, as we recognize the achievements and equal rights of women of all ages and diversities, including faith, race, ethnicity, and gender or sexual identity, we proudly salute Dr. Ghani and Nurse Practitioner Leal for their dedication to delivering

high-quality care and their contributions to forging gender equality. Through their thoughts, words and actions, they are shining examples of the impact women are making in our community and on so many lives.

Thank you!



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On behalf of Superintendent of Schools David H. Gonzalez and the board of trustees, United Independent School District would like to congratulate our Laredo ISD partners.

*Dr. Sylvia Rios
&
Chief Doreen Hale*

for their accomplishments in the fields
of education and law enforcement.

The District would also like to congratulate the other inspiring women selected by Laredo Morning Times for this important recognition.

Thanks to their leadership in business, trucking, and agriculture, we are one step closer to living in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive world where we can truly **#BreakTheBias**.

**INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY
#BreakTheBias**



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Gabriela Morales

P R E S I D E N T A N D C E O , L A R E D O C H A M B E R O F C O M M E R C E

Tell us about your current professional position and how did you get there?

First, I want to thank the Laredo Morning Times for this International Women's Day segment. It is important that we continue to work on a more equitable society, free of bias and stereotypes, particularly for women. I am honored to be featured in this section along with other amazing women who have broken through the glass ceiling and paved the way for the many women that come behind us. My current position is

President & CEO at the Laredo Chamber of Commerce, the largest business organization representing the interests of businesses of all sizes and sectors in Laredo. I was both humbled and excited to step into this role as it represented not only a homecoming for me personally but is also the culmination of a long journey professionally. From a personal standpoint, I was excited to take on this role as it is a homecoming of sorts for me. I spent most of my formative years in this city. I graduated from John B. Alexander High.

I was a student at Laredo Community College. I worked for the City leading its efforts to build its international profile. These experiences shaped much of not only who I am as a person but also my desire to help businesses reach their full economic potential for the betterment of the surrounding community.

This role has also allowed me to look back on the road I took to get here knowing that while not always easy or even enjoyable at times, it was well worth it. I took the road less traveled to get

here and am very proud of it. I am not ashamed to say that my path was not that of the traditional student completing high school and moving straight into a four-year institution. I had to work my way through college starting with community college before moving to a major institution. It took me several years to complete my undergraduate studies. Yet it was because of that non-traditional route that allowed me to truly appreciate the knowledge these institutions afforded me and put myself in a position to

succeed. Unlike the traditional students, I had valuable professional experience when I graduated. In being more experienced and more mature than the traditional undergrad, I was also wiser to expand my college choices to graduate from a renowned university. I was also able to better accept the fact that simply having even a graduate degree does not automatically entitle you to a top position in any organization. I understood that I would still have to prove myself beyond my academic credentials and work my



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Boot Barn staff Victoria Villarreal, Priscilla Sandoval, Peter Solis, Laredo Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Gabriela Morales and Brandon Gutierrez celebrate the grand opening of Boot Barn, Friday, Dec. 3, 2021. (Danny Zaragoza/Laredo Morning Times)

way to reaching my goal and leading the Laredo Chamber of Commerce is proof that my efforts were not in vain. Again, the path was not easy but was entirely worthwhile to get here.

International Women's Day this year calls for us to imagine a gender equal world. How does that look to you?

When I think of a gender equal world, I think of the dream Dr. Martin Luther King spoke of during the March on Washington. He spoke of his hope for his children to grow up ... "in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Though the overarching aim of that iconic speech was a call to end racism in the United States, the ideal for people to be judged only by the "content of their character" is one that I believe can be expanded in our times to include gender equality. Now, in no way am I

trying to conflate the struggle for civil rights with the fight for gender equality, but the idea of a world that looks beyond outward appearance and sees only our character is a fundamental element of a gender equal world. A gender equal world is one in which men and women are afforded the same opportunities for professional advancement not because of our gender but the content of our character, the content of our body of work. A gender equal world is one in which our society views the issues of affordable daycare, equal pay, and harassment in the workplace not through the lens of gender but as issues plaguing our society as whole and treated as such. A gender equal world that strives for an equal playing field for women, not because we are women but because we are deserving as human beings.

Have you experienced or noticed bias, stereotypes or

About the Chamber

Founded in 1915, the Laredo Chamber of Commerce is Laredo's and Webb County's longest running business organization. Headquartered at 2310 San Bernardo Ave. since 1974, the Laredo Chamber has been an advocate for the local business community for over a century. With 608 members representative of every industry in the community, the Laredo Chamber is accredited with 5 stars by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Only 200 chambers out of 7,000 across the country are accredited by this organization

discrimination as you rose to your current job?

Yes, and they have been for the most part unspoken. They are subtle actions of ours that show the biased behavior. For the most part, it's carried within cultures and from

generation to generation. The male-heavy decision-making room prevails and transcends cultures. Living in the nation's capital for over a decade - and seeing progressive minds at work for a better society - opened up my eyes in the many ways we unintentionally apply our bias to things we do and opinions we offer.

What advice would you offer younger women who are starting out on their career paths when it comes to fighting discrimination?

My advice is to take the challenge. For them to stand for what is right no matter how uncomfortable it could be and to continue to work despite seemingly impossible odds. As I said earlier, my professional journey was not always easy nor entirely enjoyable. There were many times I was passed over for positions I knew I was qualified for. There were many times that I was forced to wonder if I had hit

the proverbial glass ceiling. Yet despite how bleak those moments seemed at the time, I never let it take me off my path. Like Sen. Elizabeth Warren, I persisted, I endured, I continued to fight. That is the only way for us to grow as individuals and society. Do not be afraid to rock the boat and speak out.

What are some typical stereotypes that women face and how do we fight them?

I'd say the typical stereotype we face, particularly in Hispanic communities like ours, is that women have to do it all. That we must be good homemakers, and cooks, and excel in our profession, and devoted mothers, and contributors of society, and so many other things. And the reality is that men are not measured with the same stick. And that the system currently is not equipped for anyone to achieve this keeping their mental health in balance.

Congratulations

*To all the women in our community for
being recognized for your leadership!*

Dr. Sylvia Rios *(LISD Superintendent)*

Chief Doreen Hale *(LISD Police Chief)*

Gabriela Morales *(Chamber of Commerce)*

Melissa Huddleston *(LMCA)*

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Vantage Bank congratulates each of you
on this well-deserved recognition. Thank
you for continuously leading the way for
women in Laredo!

DR. SYLVIA RIOS
LISD Superintendent

CHIEF DOREEN HALE
LISD Police Chief

GABRIELA MORALES
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Kimberly Tijerina

PRESIDENT AND CEO, CBD TEXAS FARMS AND LTM CBD PRODUCTS

Tell us about your current professional position and how did you get there?

I was raised in an environment where the girls in our family were taught everything the boys were. My grandfather put me on a tractor at eight, I drove loads of cattle in the Mac truck to the gate when I was 12, I was taught to throw calves, dig a post hole, and learned how to run a

business from the ground up by my parents. Being a "girl" was no excuse for not learning about the trade. I was never put in a box just because I was born a girl. So, I had no hesitation as a woman to jump into the hemp industry.

In 2019 Tano and I formed a new company, CBD Texas Farms. We have a hemp grow operation that has both an indoor grow facility and

outdoor farm. We also have two product lines, LTM (Live the Moment) and CBD Texas Farms. I am President of both arms of the company and supervise pretty much everything we do from seed to sale. I participate in every aspect of the business including driving the tractor, running machinery, doing manual labor, signing on oil clients and selling our products.

International Women's Day

this year calls for us to imagine a gender equal world. How does that look to you?

A gender equal world would honor the beauty and strengths in both genders and allow each gender to have an equal opportunity to thrive in every arena of business and public life. The truth is that if we are talking on an international scale, women in the United States have every opportunity

there is. We, as American women, should be grateful and proud to be Americans where we have laws and a legal system that provides protections. I pray that all women in all nations would have those same freedoms and protections. Our government should hold accountable and sanction countries that tolerate civil rights abuses against women who are held in and suffer

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modern day slavery. We cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering of our sisters around the world.

Have you experienced or noticed bias, stereotypes or discrimination as you rose to your current job?

I have absolutely experienced bias and stereotyping. Mostly it ends up being comical. When I was researching extraction companies and would visit their onsite facilities the operation managers would address my farm manager who is male, instead of me. Then I would pose a thoughtful question or name a part of machinery – most people wouldn't have a clue about – they figured out pretty quickly who was making the decisions. At least once a week I get asked to “speak to the boss or man in charge.” I think that the agriculture industry is one that remains male-dominated, so it is not exactly normal for a woman to call about a large piece of machinery or pallets of fertilizer or plumbing parts or water tanks. Overall, I have actually been treated with a great deal of respect because very few women run agricultural businesses. It has also given me a great deal of opportunity to be one of the few female farmers in a brand-new industry and has attracted clients to work with us. While it is difficult to get past stereotypes – pioneering is never easy – I have just decided to cut my own path.

Family, Heritage and The Future

For five generations, our family has been a steward of the land. South Texas heritage soil is part of our past and is our future. Our venture into hemp farming compliments our established ranching and deer operations and we continue the family tradition of hard work, hands on management, and organic stewardship. From the time a hemp seed goes in the ground, until it is used in a consumable product, it is a healer. Cbd Texas Farms hemp is grown outdoors and indoors depending on the season. Unlike marijuana and medical marijuana, which have high levels of THC, our hemp is grown for CBD which contains under .3% THC. Our CBD oil is grown to be used in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and nutritional supplements. The seeds are certified hemp seeds approved by the State of Texas. We have implemented a rigorous testing schedule and have been 100% compliant. Our girls, as we call them, are tested continuously throughout the flower season, are officially tested by a Texas certified sample contractor, and are tested again before leaving our facility. All that to say, we grow it, so we know it!

From CBD Texas Farms website

If men don't want to work for me or with me, I move on. It has served me well. I am blessed to have a great husband that props me up and encourages me, parents who have taught me to be lady (but a tough one), and a farm manager and team who respects me as a woman and are on my side.

What advice would you offer younger women who are starting out on their career paths when it comes to fighting discrimination?

You WILL face bias, harassment, or discrimination at some point. I am a 47-year-old married mother of four and I still deal with it. When it comes

up, I just walk away and don't engage. Yet, I don't allow it to make me a bitter man hater. Act like you are equal. Be confident, womanhood is not a handicap, it's a blessing. On the other hand, don't weaponize your femininity; be a woman without making an issue of it. Dress for work not for the club, it sets the tone for relationships. When people, even other women try to put you into a box...stand on top of it. Don't be overly sensitive, that's what people expect women to do. If you are the boss, act like it, with a dose of humility not arrogance. If you are a subordinate and harassed or discriminated against by a superior or a

colleague, don't accept sexual idolatry. Report it and don't get yourself in a compromising situation because of fear of reprisals. No job is worth it, leave and leave quickly. Embrace being a woman, the world can't exist without us. Don't Hesitate, don't blink, just jump in.

What are some typical stereotypes that women face and how do we fight them?

In the industry I am in it is not common for a business like ours to be run by a female. So, the stereotypical things I get hit with are women “don't know much” about agriculture, that I can't possibly understand all the intricacies of the industry. There's a lot to it, measurements, pressures, machinery, soil, and I could go on and on. I am never afraid to ask questions about something I don't understand and I am constantly learning. Education and confidence are how we fight the stereotype. Learn about each aspect of the industry, not to impress, but because it's important to be prepared and knowledgeable. I also never make my womanhood an excuse for anything. If I'm late, I'm late. If I'm tired, I am tired. But never because I am “a female.” We fight the stereotype by not acting like what chauvinists expect. I don't put a target on my own back to invite discrimination, but I also don't accept being treated as inferior.





On behalf of our office staff, board of directors and over 600+ members of the Laredo Chamber of Commerce, congratulations Gabriela on your recognition. We are all proud of you.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our community



LaredoChamber
of Commerce

Congratulations

To all the women in our community for being recognized for your leadership!

Dr. Sylvia Rios (LISD Superintendent)

Chief Doreen Hale (LISD Police Chief)

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Melissa Huddleston (LMCA)

Kimberly Tijerina (CBD Texas Farms)



Celina T. Oliveira, Au.D., CCC-A
Doctor of Audiology
Founder & President



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Congratulations and Best Wishes

on International Women's Day
to two strong and dedicated women
of our community!

**Dr. Sylvia
Rios**

(LISD Superintendent)

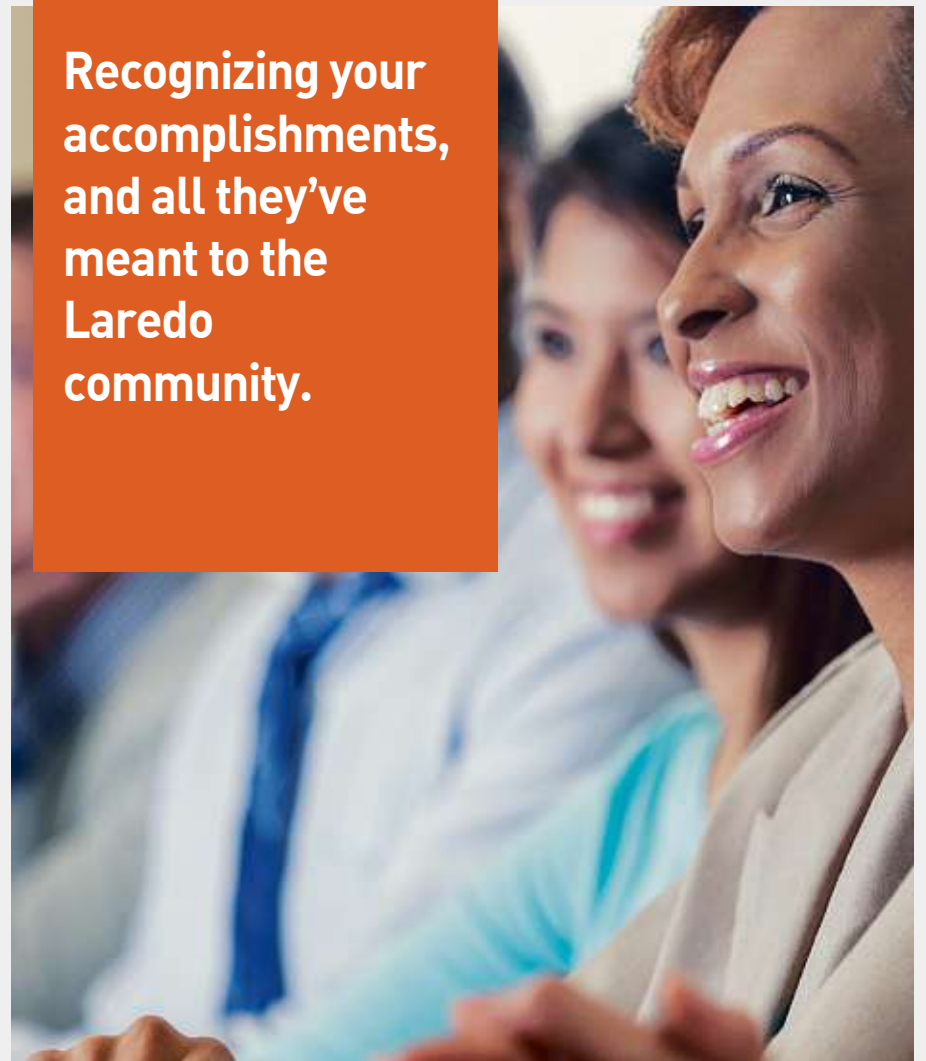


**Chief
Doreen Hale**
(LISD Police Chief)

from your friends at

Kazen, Meurer & Pérez, L.L.P.
KM&P
Attorneys at Law

**Recognizing your
accomplishments,
and all they've
meant to the
Laredo
community.**



Today, we're proud to join the Laredo community in congratulating the local International Women's Day honorees for their passion, and commitment to leading us forward. You've shown us that when we work together toward a common goal, we leave lasting impressions.

To learn more about PNC visit [pnc.com/about us](https://pnc.com/about-us).



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Melissa Huddleston

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE LAREDO MOTOR CARRIERS ASSOCIATION



Tell us about your current professional position and how did you get there?

I am currently the Executive Director for the Laredo Motor Carriers Association. I was hired to run the association when it was just 3 months old. What began as 18 members has grown to 272 members in the last 5 ½ years. I wasn't looking for a job in the trucking industry but it fell in my lap as I was in transitions of jobs. The list of skills on my resume was what the association needed at the time I was hired. It has been the most rewarding job I've held. Along with this, I am also CEO and Owner of two businesses, Studio Blue Interiors & Studio Blue Homes. Where my roles there are Interior Designer and Contractor.

International Women's Day this year calls for us to imagine a gender equal world. How does that look to you?

A gender equal world is a world where men and women are able to share equally in the distribution of power and influence; have equal opportunities for financial independence through work or through setting up businesses; enjoy equal access to education and the opportunity to develop personal ambitions and interests. Societies that value women and men as equal are safer and healthier. An International Labour

Organization study showed that if, by 2025, the worldwide gender gap in the labor market shrank by 25 percent, one result would be a 204 million increase in the workforce, which would represent US \$5.8 trillion in global GDP. In 2016 there were only 21 female heads of state in the entire world. Yes, only 21. As the world continues to bridge the gap for gender equality, women still continue to face challenges and the gap still remains large. However, that hasn't stopped women from rising to executive level positions. We have to work harder and prove more, but the climb is rewarding and something to boast about. As one of my female inspirations have said, "If there's one thing I've learned in life, it's the power of using your voice." – Michelle Obama.

Have you experienced or noticed bias, stereotypes or discrimination as you rose to your current job?

Personally, I don't believe I have. I have always worked for leaders who respected my opinion and my position. If there was any biasness I faced as I rose to my current position, it came from my male friends, who would joke around by saying, "You're a woman going to be working in a man's industry. Aren't you nervous?" Through my performance those jokes and questions were answered. I am blessed to have the

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

respect of my colleagues who have been mentors and great leaders, who have taken the time to teach and let me grow by assuring I was involved at every meeting no matter how tough or intimidating. From the very start I have met with local, state, and federal government officials such as the Mayor, Councilmen, Judges, CBP & Port Directors, Texas Representatives, Texas Senators, the Governor, House of Representative members in congress in D.C., Senators in D.C., Presidents of important associations throughout the U.S. and many more important individuals that I have had the pleasure to listen and learn from. I have also had the pleasure to meet some amazing ladies who are in high-ranking positions in the trucking industry.

What advice would you offer younger women who are starting out on their career paths when it comes to fighting discrimination?

A confident, ambitious, empowering and accomplished woman earns respect. She knows she is destined for greatness and prioritizes her life to achieve her dreams. Know your worth and don't let anyone tell you that you can't. I'm sure you've heard that phrase, we are living in a man's world. Don't stress nor let that determine what you will become. Through your journey to success and leadership, focus on supporting other women. It's the most empowering change you can make. Women in the room begets more women in the room and that begets more opportunity for us all. Say what you believe, particularly when you know it's not what a woman is expected to say. Do this to contribute your best thinking

to the word and honor the generations of women who came before us who were silenced. Jennifer Palmieri, author of the book, *She Proclaims: A Declaration of Independence from a Man's World*, says in her book, "Do not settle for less than you deserve. When you do that, you are diminishing the value of all women. Stop expecting to do worse than the men and don't accept it when it happens." You got this!

What are some typical stereotypes that women face and how do we fight them?

Personally, the stereotypes I have witnessed is the lack of consideration for higher roles for women. I have experienced in my past instances where I was passed up or treated like I could only do a secretary/assistant job. Showing my hard work and determination, I have gained the respect of my male peers to not only consider but recommend me as a leader for important roles. Another stereotype that women face is the thought that we are limited in the capacity to do tough physical jobs. In the trucking industry for example, there is a big lack of professional drivers. Companies are starting to target women. They have realized that no matter what the job or the physical labor it requires, women can certainly do the job. This is not just from a desk but actual tough physical labor. Finally, the gap difference in salary is not so much a stereotype but a reality. Women should be making equal salary to their male peers. This should be based on performance and not gender. I believe our industry has made great strides in this; however, there is more work to be done for equality in this sector and all sectors in general.



Happy International Women's Day!

*Congratulations to all LMT recipients from
Attorney German Cantú and staff!*



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*(Front row left to right: Sandy Gonzalez (Case Manager); Tessie Medina-Cantú (Operations Manager); Bella Alaniz (TAMIU Student Intern); Back row left to right: Adriana Trinidad (Property Damage Analyst); Connie Benavidez (Case Manager); Samantha Ambriz (Operations Mgmt Assistant); Not pictured: Gretel Trejo (Legal Assistant)
Principal office in San Antonio, TX*

MARCH 8 • 2022

International Women's Day

Congratulations

- **Gabriela Morales**
Laredo Chamber of Commerce - President and CEO
- **Dr. Sylvia Rios**
Laredo Independent School District - Superintendent
- **Chief Doreen Hale**
Laredo Independent School District - Chief of Police
- **Melissa Huddleston**
Laredo Motor Carriers Association - Executive Director
- **Kimberly Tijerina**
CBD Texas Farms

Cheers to all women!

**Thank you for all you've done to make
our world a better place.**

Your friends at - McDonald's of Laredo



**McDonald's
of Laredo**



Celebrating INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

MARCH 8, 2022



Emma Montes-Ewing
CEO



Marissa Gonzalez, M.D.
Chief of Staff



Carol Sherwood
Chairman of the Board



Cynthia Collazo
Board



Leticia "Letty" H. Perez
Board

International Women's Day marks its 45th anniversary as a mainstream global holiday by the United Nations this year. This special day celebrates the cultural, political and socioeconomic achievements and increased visibility of women throughout the world. It also promotes gender equality and empowers women and their choices regarding employment, healthcare and more.

On this special day, we salute our Chief Executive Officer, Emma Montes-Ewing, our Board of Governors Cynthia Collazo, Leticia "Letty" H. Perez and Carol Sherwood, as well as our Chief of Staff, Marissa Gonzalez, M.D.

Your accomplishments, fearless leadership and support of your staff, patients and community are an inspiration to us all ...

Thank you!



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