

FALL 2023

NEW

EDITION XI

22 JAN, 2024

COMMUNITY



INTEGRITY



EXCELLENCE



DIVERSITY



NEIU EL CENTRO PRESENTS



EMPOWERMENT *THROUGH LEARNING*



Message from Interim Director, Rebeca Lamadrid-Quevedo



Celebrating the Successes of Another Remarkable Semester!

Welcome to the Fall 2023 El Centro Newsletter! I hope you all had a restful and joyful winter break. I know I did!

To begin this message, I want to share with you that January 2024 marks my 15th anniversary of working with NEIU and specifically with El Centro. NEIU El Centro has been a second home to me which has provided me with the opportunity to establish beautiful professional and personal relationships that include students, co-workers, faculty and other relationships born through collaboration with community organizations, high schools and school districts. I have witnessed countless beginnings of university life; many students set foot in this space (and the previous space in Pulaski and Belmont) and took advantage of the resources offered to them, succeeding in their academic and professional path, thus filling us with pride for the role we played in their journey. I consider myself lucky to “work” doing what I like.

If you are not familiar with the work we do at NEIU El Centro, this newsletter will offer you a glimpse into the work we do with our students, faculty, and collaborators inside and outside the university.

You will learn about the life of Diana Calderon, our El Centro alumni who left us too soon. From engaging workshops to community collaborations El Centro’s impact goes far beyond the campus grounds.

Save the date for our Latinx Family Day on Saturday, March 16, 2024 from 11 am - 2 pm. A welcome event for current, new admitted and prospective students as well as their families.

To finish, I share this video where we talk more about our success program: [El Centro Scholars Program](#).

Happy start to the New Year and the Spring 2024 semester.

Warm regards.

Providing Access and Educational Opportunities to the Latinx Community Since 1968

For more than 50 years, El Centro has provided students with support to achieve their academic goals. A location with historic origin roots in community outreach, such as citizenship, education, housing, and technology. El Centro continues to stay true to its root as it serves the Avondale community.



FOLLOW OUR SOCIAL MEDIA





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Meet the Student Team

SIMON AVILA



PRE-LAW
HE/HIM/EL

EMILY SOSA



ART EDUCATION
SHE/HER/ELLA

SANTIAGO TERAN



MARKETING
HE /HIM/EL

AALIYAH BLACHER



JUSTICE STUDIES
SHE /HER/ELLA

BRAYAN CRUZ



JUSTICE STUDIES
HE /HIM/EL

ALFREDO AGUILAR



PSYCHOLOGY
HE/HIM/EL

Meet the El Centro Team

REBECA



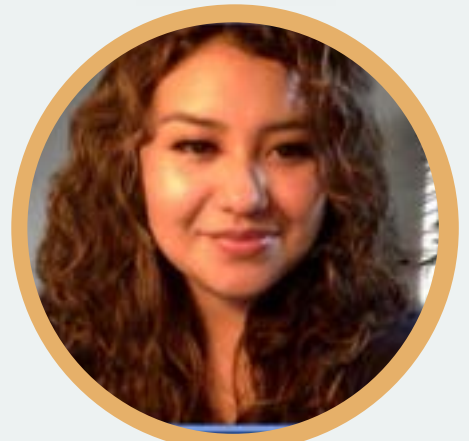
LAMADRID-QUEVEDO

MIMI



CRESPO

LIZETT



GALAN

DANNY



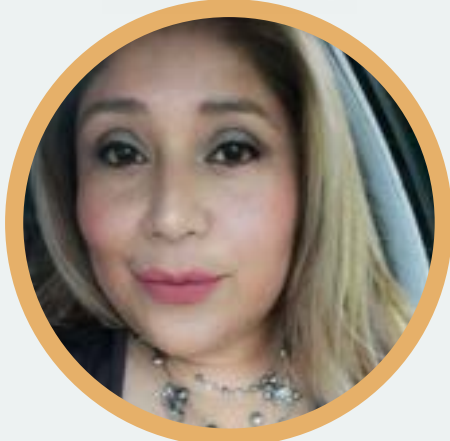
CORTEZ

VERONICA



RODRIGUEZ

CYNTHIA



CERON



ALMA



HERNANDEZ

In loving memory of

Diana Calderón

1983 - 2023

Diana's Obituary



Throughout the years, El Centro has had the privilege of working with phenomenal students, like Diana (Diani) Carolina Calderón. She was born a fighter at 7 months on December 26, 1984. In true Diani spirit, she passed away after a tough fight surrounded by family, both blood and chosen, on October 29, 2023.

Being the first born daughter to Maria and Ricardo Calderón, Diani took great part in helping raise her sisters Miriam and Yvonne.

Diani loved to read and expand her knowledge. She began her journey at NEIU in 2011 and joined El Centro team in 2012-2013 as a student worker. Eventually, graduating with honors, majoring in both Sociology and Spanish. Diani was always an advocate for underprivileged families. Recently, she was absolutely delighted at the possibility of finally going back to school, a long time dream of hers.

Diani is survived by countless aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and God children whom she loved dearly. She will be greatly missed by those that had the joy of knowing her.

"I first met Diana as my student success coach, and mentor during my first semester at NEIU - El Centro during the summer of 2006. Shortly after we became coworkers, then quickly blossomed into a close friendship and ultimately, someone I could call as part of my family. Diana was an intelligent, wise, and strong-willed leader. She was a voice for others and an advocate for those who were in need. I cherish the time we spent together, both as colleagues and friends. We grew as young students to adult professionals, sharing many milestones throughout each other's lives. The memories of Diana will always be remembered and cherished."

With love,
Eddie Mendoza,
Former NEIU El Centro Coordinator

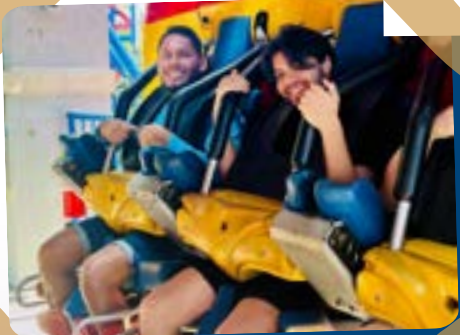


Welcome El Centro Financial Aid Coordinator



El Centro is excited to welcome our new Financial Aid Coordinator, Danny Cortez, M.A. He received his Bachelor's degree in Communications from Northern Illinois University and recently obtained his Master's degree in Higher Education focusing on ENGaging Latinx Communities for Education (ENLACE) at Northeastern Illinois University. Before joining El Centro team, he had been in the human resources field for five years. He realized his passion was for higher education after recruiting college students for internship opportunities. In his spare time, you can find him running the streets of Chicago as he trains for Marathons, attending dance socials, and exploring new books. Danny is excited to start his new journey and has an open-door policy to learn, mentor, and connect with individuals.

Welcome Danny to NEIU El Centro!



Financial Resources

For Your Academic Journey



SUMMER TRANSITION PROGRAM



For more than 10 years, Northeastern Illinois University has offered the Summer Transition Program (STP) to incoming freshmen. Students have the opportunity to get a head start on their academic journey. El Centro Scholars had eight (8) remarkable students work with a peer mentor, engage in English and Math readiness workshops, and embarked on their free summer course.

Students worked with educator and artist, Victor Montañez, to create a community self-portraits. At the end of the program, students celebrated with their families via art walk-through event. Students transition to their first full academic year with a village of support and resources.

finally
FINISHED



Latinx College Day

A+



Proyecto Pa'lante and El Centro Scholars, sponsored by the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and NEIU Title V Grant: Caminos al Exito, collaborated in hosting Latinx College Day for admitted and prospective students. Students were welcomed with resources to immerse themselves in the NEIU academic environment. From experiencing a mock class for Latino/a and Latin American studies and Science, to early access onboarding support, reviewing their financial aid and learning about the cohort programs for El Centro and Proyecto Pa'lante.

Current El Centro and Proyecto Pa'lante students shared their advice on a student panel. Students contributed to their success at NEIU to the wraparound services they received at the beginning of their journey.

TAQUIZA



El Centro celebrated Latinx History Month with its third annual Taquiza. Students, staff and faculty enjoyed music, complimentary tacos & churros, and the bull-ride. Goldie made an appearance in selfies.

This event is co-sponsored by the HSI Title V Individual Grant, NEIU Foundation, CCAS, Proyecto Pa'Lante, El Centro, Pedrosos Center, Student Affairs, Student Leadership Development, and Office of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion.





TAQUIZA 2023

EMPOWERING DREAMS FUNDRAISER

BY EL CENTRO & PROYECTO PA'LANTE

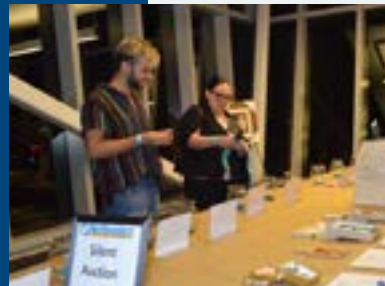


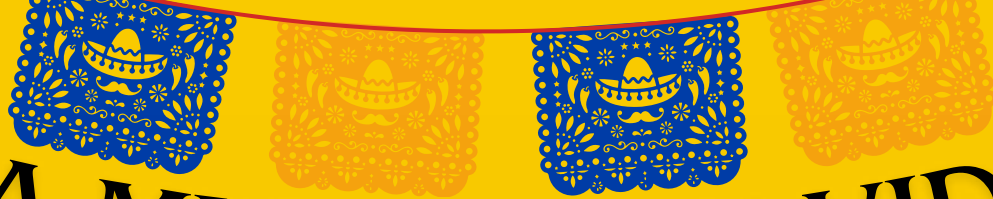
Since
2018

On October 5, 2023, El Centro and Proyecto Pa'lante teamed up to host the 3rd annual fundraiser. The Empowering Dreams Fundraiser, formally known as Beer & Bites, brought together alumni, faculty, staff and community members for a night of celebration and to increase our emergency scholarship funds. Saul Manon-Arellano and Miguel Casimiro, alumni from Proyecto Pa'lante spoke about the scholarship and the wraparound key services they received as students.



A night to remember with live performance by Chicago based musician, Rosalba Valdez, sang "Lucha de Familias." Music focused on social justice and immigration, and about families staying together in the face of deportation. Guests enjoyed a silent auction, and a few tested their luck with the raffle. With the community support, El Centro and Proyecto Pa'lante fundraised collectively \$6,000.





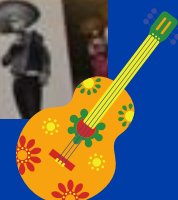
LA MUERTE EN VIDA



In collaboration with
Palenque LSNA, El Centro
hosted Mexican
Photographer/Filmmaker
Natha Williamss
(@nathawilliamss).



Natha Williamss presented a
collection of original photographs in
honor of Day of the Dead. El Centro
community and LSNA learned about
his creative process. A glimpse of
Mexican traditions brought to
Chicago, NEIU El Centro.



STUDENT EVENTS



PUMPKIN CARVING & MOVIE NIGHT

NEIU students enjoyed a Halloween movie night with complimentary snacks. Students joined a pumpkin carving contest and their creativity came to fruition.



Left: Jennifer Sedano, Annie Zamudio, Jacqueline Landi

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

In honor of Dia de Los Muertos, a Mexican old tradition, El Centro classes were invited to create their altars. This year, Professor McFarlin's Justice Studies class brought to life a lively altar.



STUDENT EVENTS



SCAVENGER WEEK

Brayan Cruz, junior in Justice Studies, won first place in a El Centro 3rd annual scavenger hunt.

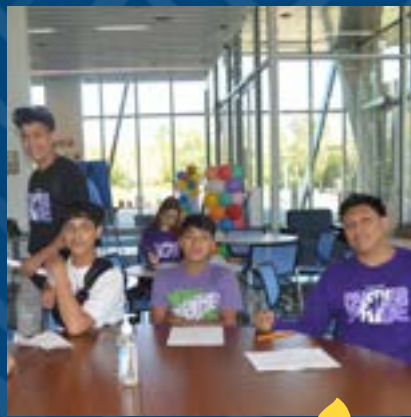


ENGLISH 325: GOTHICS



English 325: Gothics, taught by Professor Emily Garcia, had an end-of-semester panel. Open to the community, conversations sparked about film, music and art engaging in gothic aesthetics and/or traditions.

HIGH SCHOOL VISITS



PEACE AND EDUCATION HIGH SCHOOL

Peace and Education Coalition Alternative, a Southwest side, High School visited NEIU El Centro in October. Students and counselors learned about the El Centro Scholars program, academics and passed El Centro trivia. #NEIUbound



HIGH SCHOOL VISITS



CURIE HIGH SCHOOL

CURIE, A SOUTHWEST SIDE HIGH SCHOOL, VISITED EL CENTRO, SPONSORED BY JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT CHICAGO. STUDENTS RECEIVED A TOUR, STUDENT PANEL AND LEARNED ABOUT THE BILINGUAL/ BICULTURAL COMMUNITY AT EL CENTRO. STUDENTS INQUIRED ABOUT MAJORS, TUITION, SCHOLARSHIPS, STUDENT LIFE AND MORE.



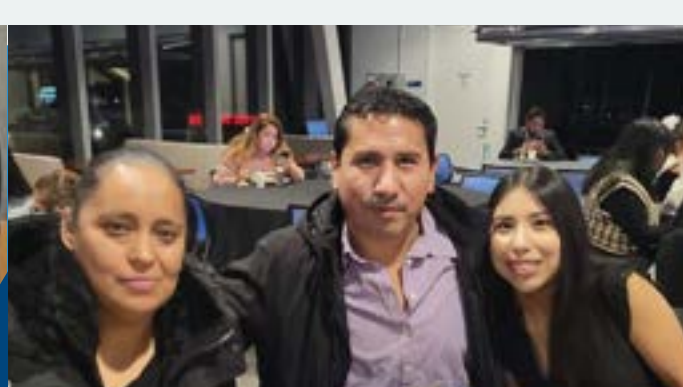
Student Success Story



Jacqueline Landi

Jacqueline Landi is a freshman at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) where she is a part of the freshman cohort here at the El Centro campus. Jacqueline started her journey at El Centro through the Summer Transition Program (STP). Where she is planning on majoring in Computer Science with a minor in Marketing. Jacqueline is taking El Centro by storm. When asked how her time has been here so far this is what Jacqueline had to say, "It's been very comforting and I really feel really happy right now. I feel like a part of it is a sense of feeling. I feel very welcomed and I enjoy every class." Since July of 2023, El Centro has helped create very memorable moments for Jacqueline. The peer mentors, professors, and the El Centro faculty have all helped develop a fun learning environment. Some of the extracurricular activities Jacqueline is currently involved in include: the CAS Program as a student worker and is a mentor of Techolochicas. Jacqueline wishes to be a part of the Honors and McNair programs available here at NEIU. Jacqueline has the passion and love to educate herself. Techolochicas allows her to work with high school students where the program helped Jacqueline find herself within it. While the CAS program allows her to sharpen her computer science skills. The Honors and McNair programs would help develop Jacqueline's current crafts and set her on the right path for graduation.

Jacqueline's overall goal is to work for and develop software for a company after graduation. Here are some fun facts about Jacqueline! Her zodiac sign is Capricorn, favorite dish is Spaghetti, with her current favorite song being *Now and Then* by the Beatles. Some of Jacqueline's hobbies include: playing the clarinet, practicing playing music and participating in her high school marching band. "I even thought about getting involved with the music department here on campus." When looking for motivation, Jacqueline turns to her family and the El Centro campus. The faculty at El Centro have been credited for making the location an inclusive environment. That has continuously helped her stay engaged with the community, "In general, yeah I do find it really comforting and I do like how they organize the events." Jacqueline credits staff member Lizett C Galan as, "The first stepping stone to start my attendance here..." Some of Jacqueline's plans after college include visiting her family in Mexico. "I look to myself and think about what I have done in my life... my family would be like the reason I am here today."



IME (INSTITUTE FOR MEXICANS ABROAD) BECAS

Since 2011, the Consulate General of Mexico in Chicago has partnered with NEIU El Centro to provide generous scholarships to our students. This year, NEIU's grant of \$7,000 was awarded to 6 El Centro students,

bringing the total support from the Consulate over the years to \$121,000 for scholarships that have benefited 74 students. Congratulations to the Fall 2023 Scholarship recipients, Diana Bahena, Fernanda Balleza, Ivan Ocampo, Jacqueline Landi, Jessica Jasso, Renata Trejo. We want to thank Ambassador Reyna Torres Mendivil, Consul General, Claudia Castillo Ayala, Consul for Community Affairs, Alejandro Rosales, Educational Affairs Department for joining us for the celebration.

TREASURES OF CLASSICAL MUSIC FROM MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES



Two outstanding pianists with international careers, who have experienced the migration phenomenon between Mexico and the United States, come together to perform a musical repertoire that celebrates the brotherhood between both countries. Despite having grown up in different contexts, they share roots that are consolidated and expressed through the universal language of music.

Nohra De Francisco Scholarship



Juan Gabriel Moreno, Colombian Architect, designed and brought to life NEIU El Centro. In honor of his mother, Juan Gabriel Moreno created the *Nohra De Francisco Scholarship*. The scholarship grants an NEIU El Centro Scholar the opportunity to travel to reconnect to their roots. Amber Chance, junior majoring in Special Education, had the opportunity this summer to travel to Oaxaca, Mexico. After years, she rediscovered the “collective work of art, a testament to the creativity and pride of the community.”

She explored Monte Albán, an ancient Zapotex city overlooking the Oaxacan valley to the Museo de las Culturas de Oaxaca, in the historic Santo Domingo monastery. The rich history of Oaxaca filled Amber with a connection and appreciation for her roots. Her curiosity peaked as she toured the agave farm and mezcal distillery. It's Oaxacan spirit and connection to Zapotec left a profound appreciation for Amber. Without the generous travel scholarship, Amber was able to rediscover home.

From NEIU

To Oaxaca, Mexico

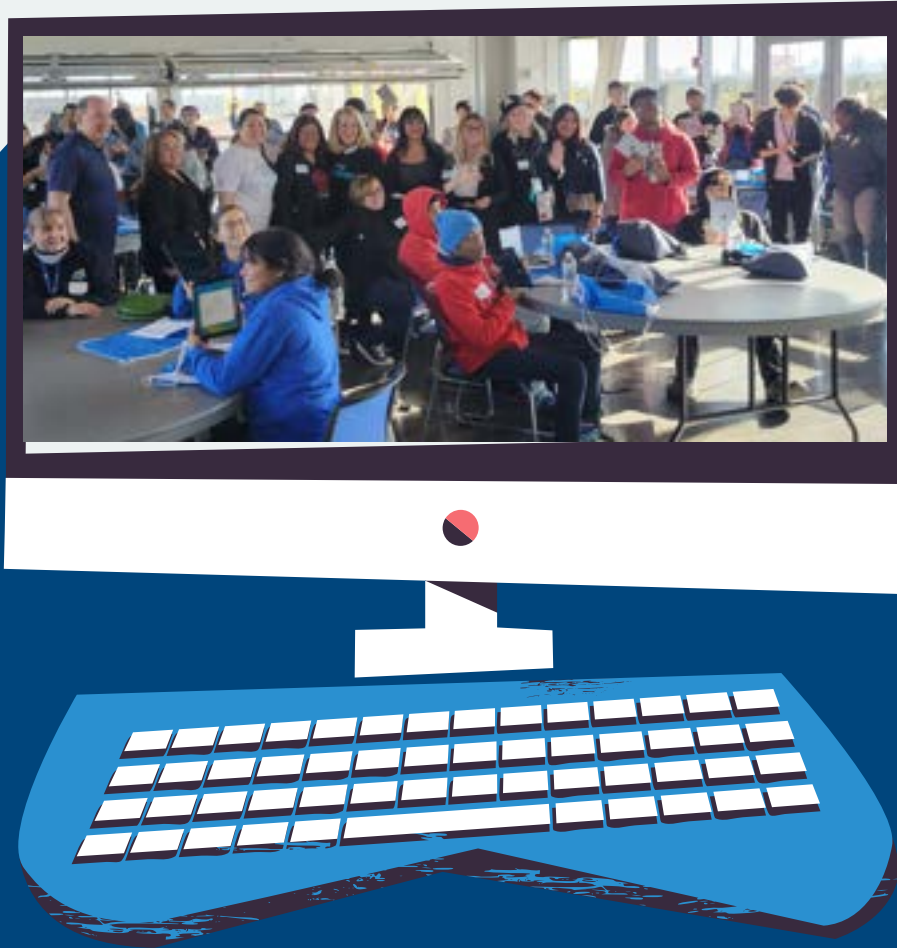
“The Museum, cooking class, and mezcal tour were more than simply fun activities;



they were like puzzle pieces fitting together to show me where I came from.”



AT&T HIGH TECH DAY 2023



NEIU El Centro partnered with AT&T Hacemos and Junior Achievement for a High Tech day. High school students learned about technical careers and experienced mock classes. Eileen Mitchell President, AT&T Illinois provided remarks to high school students and surprised them with an Ipad for each one of them as a way to celebrate the 25th anniversary of this important event.





FALL OPEN HOUSE

Each semester, El Centro hosts an Open House inviting prospective students and their families to explore El Centro campus and learn more about El Centro Scholars program. Various university departments like the Student Counseling, Music, Proyecto Pa'lante, Health Services and our in-campus partners, Center for College Access and Success (CCAS) were present.

Visitors were provided with a tour, games, and the opportunity to learn about all the resources NEIU has to offer.

Be on the lookout for our next semester Open House!



»»» FALL 2023

COUNSELOR'S BREAKFAST

El Centro hosted its 3rd annual Counselor's Breakfast. High School counselors, College & Career Coaches, City College of Chicago Advisors and administrators joined to learn about NEIU, NEIU El Centro, Success Programs and more. With welcoming remarks by Interim President Katrina Bell-Jordan, PhD, and Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs R. Shayne Cofer, PhD.



»»»

Connect with us as
we support your
transition to NEIU El
Centro!

**TITLE V: CAMINOS AL ÉXITO
COOPERATIVE**

»»»



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»»» EL CENTRO, PROYECTO PA'LANTE, AND ADMISSIONS



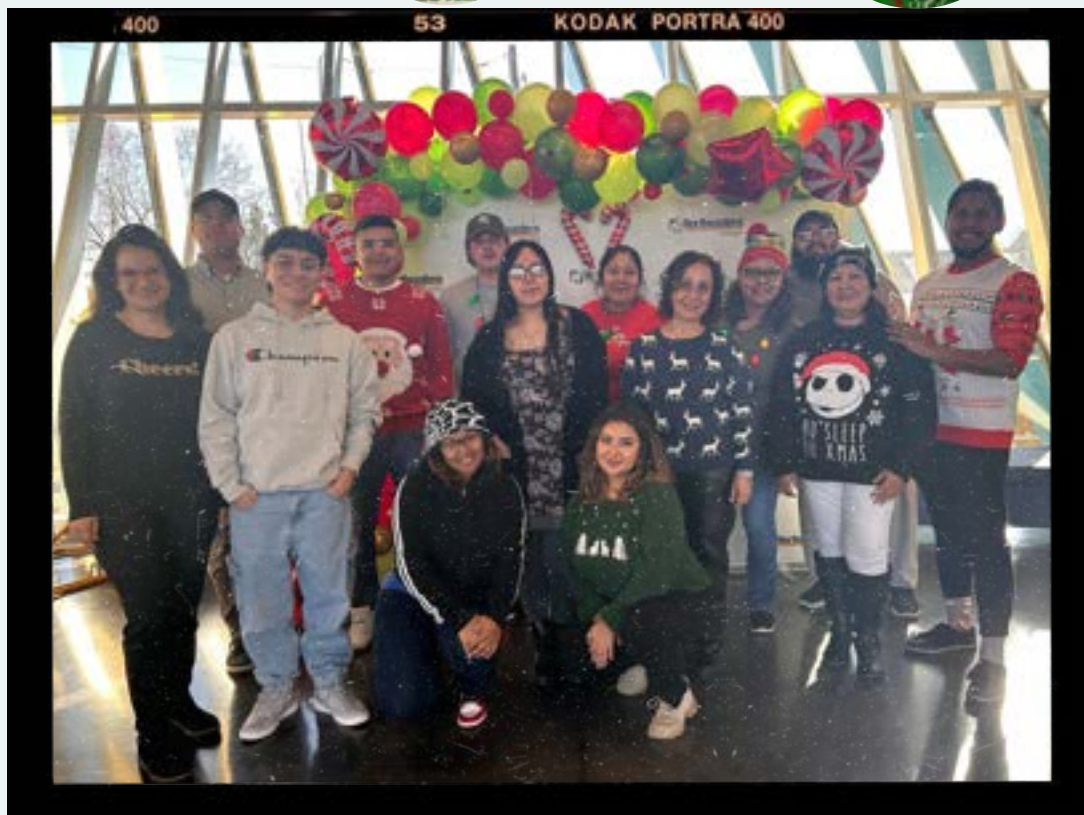
CHRISTMAS



CELEBRATE THE SEASON OF GIVING!

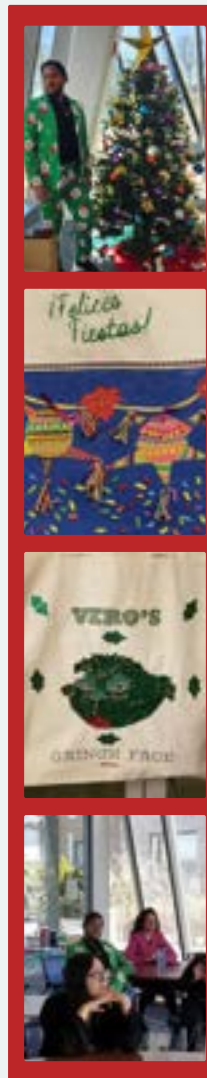
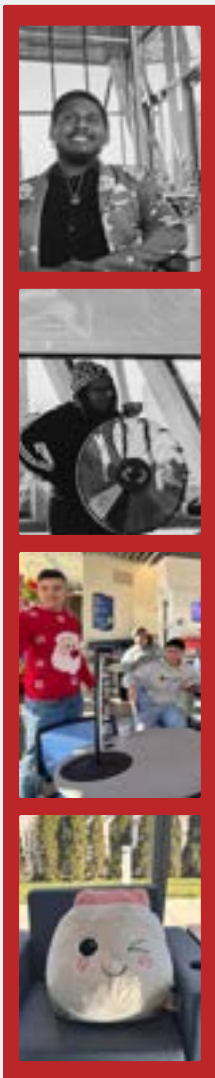
El Centro partnered with Antonia Pantoja High School for a Christmas Drive. Thank you for all the donors, including Dr. Blake from Social Work, Doris from AT&T, El Centro Staff and more. 21 students and their siblings were gifted presents for this holiday season.





El Centro Holiday Party

After planning for the Spring 2024 semester, staff and students enjoy a white elephant gift exchange and gingerbread house competition after planning for Spring 2024.



El Centro's Social Medias



neiu.edu/academics/el-centro

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@NEIUElCentro

