

Class of 2023

Nearly 12,000 Miami Dade College students received their degrees during three graduation ceremonies at loanDepot Park in Little Havana on April 22.

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**A Curve**

The baseball team finished its season at the State Tournament on May 15. Despite losing two of three games, the Sharks won 34 games this year.

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Top Museums

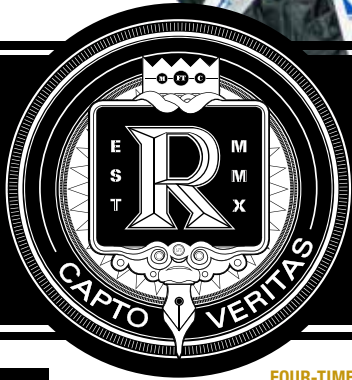
With the arrival of the summer break, *The Reporter's* Colleen Padron lists her three favorite museums to visit in Miami as the city expands its artistic muscle.

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Restrictive Measures

The Reporter's Juan S. Gomez believes the approval of SB 1718 will harm our state's immigrant community with highly restrictive measures.

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The Reporter

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER AT MIAMI DADE COLLEGE

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JACK KENT COOKE

Four MDC Students Win Renowned Jack Kent Cooke Transfer Scholarship



BRIANNA ACEVEDO / THE REPORTER

Top Scholars: Four Miami Dade College graduates were recently awarded the Jack Kent Cooke Transfer Scholarship. Pictured from left to right are Nathalie Saladrigas, Javier Gil, Kayla Ribero and Carlen Arevalo.

□ Recipients of the prestigious scholarship will receive up to \$55,000 annually to cover living expenses, tuition, books and additional fees at a four-year transfer institution.

By **Nikole Valiente**
nikole.valiente001@mymdc.net

Four Miami Dade College Honors College graduates—**Carlen Arevalo, Javier Gil, Nathalie Saladrigas** and **Kayla Ribero**—were awarded the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Transfer Scholarship.

Three of this year's winners are from Eduardo J. Padrón Campus. In the past three

years, the campus has produced eight JKC four-year institution.

The scholarship recipients will each receive up to \$55,000 annually for living expenses, tuition, books and other fees at a transfer institution.

Sixty winners were selected from a pool of more than 1,700 candidates from 448 community colleges nationwide.

Applicants had to be sophomores or recent graduates of a two-year institution in the United States with a plan to enroll full-time in a baccalaureate program in the fall. They also needed to have a minimum 3.5 GPA, demonstrate unmet financial need and have no previous enrollment at a

Carlen Arevalo

AREVALO

After immigrating to the United States when she was 12 years old to escape gang violence in El Salvador, Arevalo struggled with cyberbullying as she struggled to learn English.

Refusing to be discouraged, Arevalo

discovered how to express her creativity in middle school using photography, post design and algorithms. At MDC, she merged her passion for social media by studying business marketing.

At Padrón Campus, she served as the vice president of scholarship and leadership for Phi Theta Kappa, was a co-organizer for the Jovenes Contra el Cáncer (youth against cancer) Foundation and was president of the Meraki Youth community service club.

The 20-year-old, who was selected as a New Century Transfer Pathway Scholar and the All-USA Academic Team, graduated

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// BRIEFING

Juan S. Gomez, Briefing Editor // ☎ (305) 237-2715 // ✉ juan.gomez070@mymdc.net

VILORIA

Padrón Campus Student Selected As 2023 Newman Civic Fellow

Nicole Viloría, a second-year Honors College student at Eduardo J. Padrón Campus, was named a Newman Civic Fellow on April 6.

The award, which is the highest honor in student engagement and leadership, was provided by Campus Impact—a non-profit organization based in Boston promoting higher education.

"Finding out about this news reaffirmed my commitment to the causes I believe in," said Viloría, who emigrated from Venezuela in 2017. "I would not have done anything differently."

During her time at Padrón Campus, Viloría served as the co-editor-in-chief of *Urbana*, the campus' literary magazine, president of the Gamma Eta English Honor Society and co-vice president of Hermione's Army—a Harry Potter-based community service club.

Viloría also provided one-on-one English tutoring to Ukrainian Youth through the international non-profit organization, ENGIN.

The 20-year-old earned an associate's degree in English literature from Padrón Campus in April. She will transfer to Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut this fall to pursue her dream of becoming a writer.

—Juan S. Gomez

MDC Student Receives Voter Engagement Honor

ORTIZ

Arturo Ortiz, a nursing student at Medical Campus, was named to the Student Honor Roll by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.

The award recognized 175 students nationwide for their efforts to "advance nonpartisan student voter registration and education." Ortiz was the only recipient from Miami Dade College.

"This is a very prestigious honor and I am humbled," Ortiz said. "None of this would be possible without the collaboration of the amazing resources MDC offers."

During the 2022-23 academic year, Ortiz served as the student government association president and Phi Theta

Kappa vicepresident at Hialeah Campus. He was also involved with Motivate, a digital voter engagement platform.

Before transitioning to the Medical Campus this summer, where he will serve as SGA President, the 35-year-old completed his nursing prerequisite courses at Hialeah Campus.

—Allyson Castillo

MDC Appoints New Senior Vice Provost And Chief Financial Officer

Chris Starling was selected as the senior vice provost and chief financial officer at Miami Dade College on April 7.

He is responsible for managing the College's financial and business sectors, which include overseeing all business affairs operations.

"I was excited," Starling said. "This was the highest level in my career that I thought I would be able to achieve here at the college."

At the College, he has served as the associate vice president for business services and vice provost for business affairs, a post he has held since 2009.

Prior to joining MDC in 1999, Starling served a five-year term as an auditor general for the State of Florida.

The 54-year-old earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Florida in 1991. Two years later, he earned a master's degree in accounting from Florida International University.

—Gabriella Gutierrez

Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program Accepting Applications

Miami Dade College is accepting applications for its 10th cohort of the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Program through June 13.

The project is a partnership between Miami Dade College and Goldman Sachs—a global investment banking company.

During the 12-week initiative, participants will learn how to improve their networking and entrepreneurship skills to grow their businesses. Instruction is done through classroom sessions, one-on-one guidance and workshop events with Goldman Sachs professionals.

Applicants must be an owner or co-owner of a business that has been open for at least two years, have a minimum of two employees and have a revenue of at least \$75,000 in the last fiscal year.

The program is set to begin on Sept. 12 at Wolfson Campus.

To apply, visit the program's website at <https://www.10ksbapply.com/>.

—Juan S. Gomez

New World School of the Arts To Host Senior Showcase From May 22 to June 2

New World School of the Arts will host their annual visual arts exhibition, *Prelude 3: 2023 Senior Showcase*, from May 22 to June 2.

The exhibit, which has been held for more than three decades, features the final projects of high school seniors graduating from the New World School of the Arts.

Following an opening reception from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on May 19, the exhibit will be open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the New World Gallery, 25 N.E. 2nd Street.

The exhibition is free and open to the public.

For more information, contact NWSA at 305-237-3620 or nswainfo@mdc.edu.

—Veronica Romano

Applications Open For Koubek Center's *En Residencia* Program

The *En Residencia* program at Miami Dade College's Koubek Center is accepting applications until May 31. *En Residencia* is a year-long program that gives local artists access to four classrooms and a large studio space at the Koubek Center in exchange for their participation in one of the facilities programs or activities.

The membership-based initiative allows artists to create a maximum of two projects per year. Artists can use the Koubek Center for blocks of two months per project.

Membership cost for the entire year is \$200.

To apply for *En Residencia*, visit <https://bit.ly/42B3kFF>.

—Nidley Charles

Hialeah Campus Selects New Student Life Director

Jordan Chang was appointed as the new student life director at Hialeah Campus on March 13.

Chang, 32, will manage the department's budget, supervise staff and promote events and programs to increase student engagement on campus.

"I'm very excited to take on this role," Chang said. "My previous experiences and familiarity...will assist me in executing quality programs and events for our students."

Prior to Miami Dade College, he worked at Florida Atlantic University from 2013-2015 as a graduate assistant in the office of diversity & multicultural affairs and as the interim multicultural specialist.

For the past eight years, he worked at Sam Houston State University. First as the multicultural student services coordinator and most recently as the assistant director of the center for diversity & intercultural affairs.

Chang earned a bachelor's degree in political science and government and a master's in educational leadership and administration from Florida Atlantic University.

—Hugo Guillen



CHANG

Miami Book Fair To Host Little Haiti Book Festival

The Miami Book Fair will present its annual Little Haiti Book Festival from May 7 to 28. It aims to celebrate Haitian culture and features speakers and live art performances.

On May 7, the festival will showcase comedy shows, yoga classes and live music from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Little Haiti Cultural Complex, 212 N.E. 59 Terr.

Two one-hour discussions will be held virtually at 2 p.m. on May 21 and 28. The first will discuss the significance of Haitian Creole culture and the last will provide possible solutions for Haiti's poverty and political instability.

For more information, contact the Miami Book Fair at (305) 237-2577 or visit <https://bit.ly/41RoNcT>.

—Isabelle Greiner

Platform Offers Students Free Online Peer-to-Peer Tutoring

Knack, an online tutoring platform for college students, is partnering with Miami Dade College to expand peer learning opportunities.

The platform allows students to match with a tutor who's previously attended MDC and has mastered the course they want to receive mentoring on.

Tutoring, which is offered on a flexible schedule, is available for courses in areas like English composition, computer science, history and chemistry. Students interested in becoming a tutor must submit a college transcript and have an A in the course they want to mentor.

Tutor applications can be completed at <https://www.joinknack.com/tutors>. For more information about Knack, visit their website at <https://bit.ly/3n1C2sE>.

—Allyson Castillo



CHIRINOS

Kendall Campus Professor Named 2023 Guggenheim Fellow

Tony Chirinos, a photography professor at Kendall Campus, was selected as a 2023 Guggenheim Fellow in the photography category on April 6.

The fellowships, which award an average of 30,000 to \$45,000, are given to those who have demonstrated exceptional creative ability in the arts.

"It still hasn't hit me," said Chirinos, who will use the grant to fund a photography project on the stories behind people's scars. "I can not believe I am at that level with all the people I have admired and studied for so long."

Chirinos worked as the director of biomedical photography at Miami Children's Hospital and Baptist Hospital from 1989 to 2001. Two years later, he began his tenure as a photography professor at Kendall Campus.

The 57-year-old earned a master's of fine arts degree in 2003 from Columbia University in New York City.

—Gabriella Gutierrez

PHOTO BRIEFING

Brianna Acevedo, Photo Editor // (305) 237-2715 // brianna.acevedo001@mymdc.net



Signs Of Support: Students from more than 300 high schools and colleges in Florida walked out of their classrooms on April 21 to protest recent state legislation restricting LGBTQ rights. Pictured are students who gathered at Pride Park in Miami Beach in support of the walkout.

BRIANNA ACEVEDO / THE REPORTER



BRIANNA ACEVEDO / THE REPORTER

Good Morning: Singer Ally Evenson performs at Pride Park on April 21 during a protest against state legislation restricting LGBTQ rights.



BRIANNA ACEVEDO / THE REPORTER

Standing Tall: Students who disagree with recent state legislation restricting LGBTQ rights let their opinions be known during a protest at Pride Park on April 21.



MARIA BADIA / THE REPORTER

My Choice: Local activist, Luna, joins a crowd advocating for abortion as a basic human right at the Torch of Friendship on April 14.

// NEWS

Juan S. Gomez, Editor-in-Chief // (305) 237-2715 // juan.gomez070@mymdc.net

COMMENCEMENT

MDC Graduates Turn The Tassel At LoanDepot Park

□ Nearly 12,000 Miami Dade College students walked the stage as friends and family rooted them on at Little Havana's loanDepot Park during three commencement ceremonies on April 22.

By **Nikole Valiente and Juan S. Gomez**

nikole.valiente001@mymdc.net

Gisela Celis knows a thing or two about the curveballs life tosses.

In the last decade, the Peruvian immigrant has relocated to Canada, Mexico and the United States following the job prospects of her husband, Gonzalo Eyzaguirre, who works as a mining engineer.

Two years ago she revived her educational dreams after a 27-year hiatus, signing up for classes at West Campus to pursue an associate's degree in pre-occupational therapy.

But her studies were abruptly halted in October of 2022 after she was diagnosed with uterine cancer. Four months later, she underwent surgery to save her life.

"I never gave up on my studies," said Celis, who aspires to be a recreational therapist. "That was the part that made me feel alive because I'm ready to start my career and be a professional."

On April 22, the 51-year-old was one of nearly 12,000 Miami Dade College students from more than 107 nationalities to receive their degrees at three graduation ceremonies at Little Havana's loanDepot Park.

As students prepared for commencement to begin, a DJ sporting a gray sport coat revved up the crowd with remixes from artists like Marc Anthony, Sia and Bruno Mars. Graduates matched the musicians' energy dancing down the aisles and in their chairs while others took to social media,



BRIANNA ACEVEDO / THE REPORTER

The Finish Line: A graduate triumphantly walks across the stage on April 22 at loanDepot Park during the commencement ceremony for the Hialeah, North and West campuses.

posting selfies and group photos.

Graduates adorned their caps with roses, the flags of their native countries and glittery inspirational messages like: For With God, Nothing Is Impossible and The Best Things Go To Those Who Don't Give Up. Moments before trotting on stage, students were greeted by flashing strobe lights, a plume of smoke and a rain of silver and blue confetti that shot into the air as a remix of Pitbull's *Don't Stop The Party* played.

Onstage, students saw members of the College's Board of Trustees, student government association presidents, administrators, campus presidents and the school's Vice-Provost Malou C. Harrison and College President Madeline Pumariega.

"Colleges are the custodians of

the enduring tradition of learning," Pumariega said as she towered over students from the podium. "Commencement welcomes you, our graduates, into the realms of the academy as lifelong learners."

Each ceremony featured keynote speakers that encouraged graduates through their speeches.

Siemens president **Barbara Humpton** addressed North, West and Hialeah Campus, **Ken Griffin**, the founding CEO of Citadel—a financial services company—featured at the Wolfson, Homestead and Medical ceremonies and **Alec Ingold**, a Miami Dolphins fullback and author of *The Seven Crucibles: An Inspirational Game Plan for Overcoming Adversity in Your Life* spoke to graduates from Kendall and Eduardo J. Padrón Campus.

Prior to speaking, Griffin was recognized for making a \$20 million dollar donation to create the Griffin Scholarship Fund—an initiative to promote educational opportunities for MDC students. A college press release touted the gift as the "largest single philanthropic gift in MDC history."

Humpton, the first keynote speaker, talked about the importance of technology, the obstacles she has faced during her career and how challenges sharpen you.

"Look back at the road you've traveled to get to this place and know you've built the strength to travel the next stretch and the next one," Humpton said. "You have what it takes."

Luisana Padrino, a Venezuelan national who arrived in the United States nine years ago, was grateful

for having the opportunity to graduate from MDC despite financial struggles.

"[The U.S.] opened doors that Venezuela shut," said Padrino, who graduated from Hialeah Campus in December with an associate's degree in biology but walked during the April 22 ceremony. "But I can never forget my home because I know where I'm from."

Success stories like Padrino's were plentiful.

Twenty-year-old Tykirah Harris, a North Campus Honors College graduate, was one of eight students—each campus had a recipient—to receive the \$5,000 Board of Trustees Scholarship.

"Now that I have reached the finish line I am left with conflicting feelings because MDC has become a second home for me," Harris said. "Yet, I am excited to begin my next chapter in life."

Softball player Vicky Navarro, who won 22 games and struck out 157 batters in two seasons at the College, is also ready to turn the page toward her next challenge.

"Don't let things like tests define you," said Navarro, who plans to continue her softball career and studies at Nova Southeastern University next fall. "Just live your life, try your hardest, and if you don't succeed, you tried. You can't succeed without failure."

Arturo Ortiz, the SGA president at Hialeah Campus, was equally as reflective, addressing his peers one last time, to offer his gratitude.

"We would be remiss if we did not recognize and acknowledge our support system—your family, your friends, your loved ones, your MDC family," Ortiz said. "The opportunity to have this support made the difference between success and failure."

Staff writer *Olivia Valkenburg* contributed to this story.

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OBITUARY

Medical Campus Student Honored Posthumously During Graduation

Christina Neal, a nursing student at Medical Campus, died on March 16 following a decade-long fight with breast cancer. She received a posthumous degree during the 2023 commencement ceremony in April.

By **Juan S. Gomez**
juan.gomez070@mymdc.net

Christina Neal was known for her kindness.

In October of 2019, when her friend Claudia Moran told her she feared an abusive ex-boyfriend, Neal picked her up from her Key Biscayne home and took her to Baptist Health South Miami Hospital where the duo was part of the Nurse Scholars Program.

"It was just the kindest thing I think anybody's ever done for me," Moran said. "There are not a lot of people like that."

Today, Moran is one of the countless people touched by Neal who now mourn her loss.

Following a decade-long struggle with cancer, Neal succumbed to the disease one month prior to graduating from the Medical Campus at Miami Dade College.

Neal was posthumously awarded a bachelor's degree in nursing during last month's commencement ceremony. The award was given to her family on stage. They were greeted with a standing ovation.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALAN PHILLIP

Kind Soul: Christina Neal is remembered for her kindness and affection. Throughout her life, she helped others by serving as an oncology nurse and being there for friends during difficult situations.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JAMES NEAL

Bright Smile: Despite waging an 11 year fight against breast cancer, Christina Neal was known for having a positive attitude and not allowing her condition to limit her potential.

"We are very appreciative," said John Neal, Christina's father. "This would have been her second graduation...I just started to think about a lot of the things that she was deprived of accomplishing."

A Fighter

Christina Louise Neal was born in October of 1985 in Queens, New York. She was the youngest and only daughter of John and Marilyn Neal. A year and a half after she was born, Neal's family relocated to Florida seeking a respite from the cold.

Ever since she was a kid, Neal learned to express herself by dancing, acting and modeling. And she also developed a strong sense of leadership.

"She was always spearheading everything [at] home," said Gayle Harris, Christina's first cousin. "She bloomed into that and never lost that personality trait."

After graduating from Coral Reef High School in 2003, Neal pursued her dream of becoming a pharmacist, attending Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University. Six years later she earned a bachelor's degree in biology.

Once she obtained her degree, Neal worked as a pharmacy technician at CVS and Target.

In April of 2012, the then-26-year-old was diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer after she discovered a lump on her chest.

Within weeks, Neal had part of her left breast removed and began doing monthly chemotherapy sessions at the Lennar Foundation Medical Center in Coral Gables.

A year later, her cancer went into remission.

But in the spring of 2015, the cancer returned with a vengeance. She was diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer and it had spread to her

liver.

Neal underwent two surgeries in the fall and winter of that year to remove 75% of her liver and started chemotherapy again. Within a year, the cancer had once again retreated.

Three years later her world was uprooted again.

She received her third breast cancer diagnosis. This time it had spread to her lungs.

Neal valiantly fought the disease for four years before passing on March 16.

"She was a fighter," Marilyn said. "She just wouldn't give up."

Throughout the process, Neal formed a close bond with Cristina Upegui, who has worked as a cancer patient nurse for the past 17 years at the Diagnostic Center of Miami.

Upegui took care of Neal after various medical procedures and went with her to doctors' appointments. In September of 2015, she raised \$2,445 to cover some of Neal's medical costs.

"I try to stay away from getting personal with patients, but there was just a connection from the beginning with Christina," Upegui said. "This is a journey that we put up with together."

Inspired by Upegui's support, Neal aspired to be a nurse. In 2019, she enrolled at MDC to pursue an associate's degree in nursing.

After graduating with honors in 2021, Neal began working on her bachelor's degree. That same year, she began working as an oncology nurse at Baptist Health Baptist Hospital in Kendall.

"She was very engaged and very eager to learn," said Joy Mitts, who supervised Neal's work at Baptist until she went on medical leave in early March.

"She took a lot of initiative. She didn't want to just sit back and

watch what was done."

Kind-Hearted Spirit

Neal was known for having a massive heart and a vibrant smile.

She frequently helped her classmates. Sophia Belisle-Jane, who now works as a registered nurse at Baptist Health, was one of her study buddies. They gathered to study three times a week.

"Christina was someone that you could honestly say whatever to and she would speak to you in such a kind of way," Belisle-Jane said. "She was very open and nice from the first day I met her."

Outside of the classroom, Neal and her friends unwinded by eating at Mediterranean restaurants in Coral Gables.

"She's a firecracker," Moran said. "She's smart and kind and beautiful and funny. She just made me laugh all the time."

Neal loved re-watching films such as *Ratatouille*, *Fifty-First Dates* and *What's Love Got to Do with It* and took road trips to visit relatives in North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

Up until her final days, Neal often spoke with her first cousin Harris, who lives in California, via Google Meets.

"We can say Muhammad Ali was the greatest of all time, but I think Christina really showed us so much," Harris said. "Her body—it wasn't friendly to her—but she still fought to live."

For the past three years, Neal revealed in taking care of her black French Bulldog Luxe. The pooch died on May 4—less than two months after her death.

"Anyone who remembers her is going to remember her fondly," said James Neal, Christina's brother. "It doesn't matter how you remember her—as long as you do."

Scholarship Awards Each Student Up To \$55,000 Annually

FROM JACK KENT COOKE, FRONT

with a bachelor's degree in business administration with a 3.8 GPA in April.

Arevalo will transfer to Emerson College or Northeastern University in Boston this fall to pursue a bachelor's degree in digital marketing. She plans to obtain a master's degree in business administration from the University of Pennsylvania.

"I'm so ready for this next step in my life and in my story," said Arevalo, who aspires to be a global marketing strategist. "I want to mentor other students. I want to connect with them professionally, personally or academically."

Javier Gil



Following his father's exile from Venezuela in 2018, Gil's family, which included his mother and sister, received death threats. That year, they sought political asylum in the U.S.

Despite facing language barriers, Gil was determined to utilize his aptitude for science and math to serve his community. He was inspired by Maria Caetano—a physics professor in Venezuela, who was a chemical engineer for the country's oil and natural gas company.

"All these obstacles forged a path of growth," Gil said. "I grew, I learned a lot of new things, got to meet a lot of people and all of those connections, experiences, and challenges made me who I am right now."

At MDC, Gil studied the mitigation of marine toxins through the South Florida Research Consortium's Undergraduate Research Program at Florida International University. He also raised more than \$3,000 for the food pantry at Padrón Campus.

The 20-year-old also served as the student

government association vice president, was a member of Beta Beta Beta and Phi Theta Kappa and a calculus and organic chemistry tutor before earning an associate's degree in chemical engineering with a 4.0 GPA.

Gil plans to transfer to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology this fall to pursue a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering. He aspires to become a chemical engineer.

Nathalie Saladrigas



When she was six years old, Saladrigas saw her mother get deported from the U.S.

Left with no options, Saladrigas returned to Colombia to live with her mother. However, after struggling with anxiety and intense

nosebleeds, she returned to the U.S. three years later to live with her dad—who struggled to find a stable job and a place to live.

Following her father's death in 2020, Saladrigas realized she could use her experience to champion inclusion and activism for disenfranchised communities.

"I thought it was really important to show people how impactful they can be," said Saladrigas, who also worked jobs at Smoothie King and YouFit Gyms to support her family. "That's why I continue to do what I love, which is activism—I just want to dedicate my whole life to it."

While at Padrón Campus, Saladrigas founded the first LGBTQ+ club at her campus, served as director of civic engagement for Meraki Youth, was a volunteer for planned parenthood and an intern at the Florida Student Power Network—a non-profit organization centered on promoting social justice.

The 20-year-old, who earned an

associate's degree in sociology with a 3.9 GPA, hopes to transfer to Northeastern University in Boston to pursue a bachelor's degree in human services and international affairs.

Kayla Ribeiro



After moving to Miami from New Jersey two years ago, Ribeiro was often the only girl in her computer science courses at Kendall Campus.

Inspired by a summer program she took in high school through Girls

Who Code—an in-

ternational non-profit supporting women in computer science—Ribeiro created a chapter of the organization to promote inclusivity.

"All it takes is [to have] somebody there to tell you can do it," Ribeiro said. "I want to let girls know that I was in their shoes too, and we are able to accomplish just as much as men do in the coding world."

During her time at MDC, Ribeiro served as the president of the Honors College ambassador's program, secretary for the Omicron Tau PTK chapter at Kendall Campus and was a mentor in the Sharks Guiding Sharks club.

Ribeiro, who was named a Coca-Cola Academic Team Gold Scholar and a member of the All-Florida Academic Team by PTK, also conducted research in the spring semester on sagebrush ecosystems before earning an associate's degree in computer science with a 4.0 GPA.

The 19-year-old plans to transfer to the Georgia Institute of Technology or Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore this fall to pursue a bachelor's degree in computer science. She aspires to be a software developer.



WE KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IT MEANS



SPEAKER SERIES

Schedule Set For 2023 Miami Dade College Journalism Speaker Series

□ This year's series will host interviews with five journalists from media outlets such as *Bloomberg News*, the *Miami Herald*, NBC 6 and the *Locked On* Podcast network from April through June.

By **Nikole Valiente**
nikole.valiente001@mymdc.net

Grab your pens and notepads—the Miami Dade College Journalism Speaker Series has returned.

This year's five episodes will be broadcast on MDC-TV, YouTube and Instagram Live—@mdcthereporter. Featured guests will include journalists from *Bloomberg News*, NBC 6, the *Miami Herald* and the *Locked On Canes* podcast.

"We are excited to have these veteran journalists share their knowledge with our students," said Manolo Barco, who created the Speaker Series and serves as media adviser to *The Reporter*, the student newspaper at MDC.

Kris Anderson, a morning anchor for *NBC 6 News Today*, launched this year's series on **April 19**.

The next guest was **Alex Donno**, host of the *Locked On Canes* daily podcast, who covers the University of Miami athletics department. He was featured on **May 16** at Kendall Campus, 11011 S.W. 104 St., in Room M-239 at 11 a.m.

Donno, a 2007 UM graduate,



Back Again: The Miami Dade College Journalism Speaker Series is back this summer on MDC-TV, YouTube and Instagram Live @mdcthereporter.

has covered the Hurricanes since 2005—first at the university's student radio station and later on 560 WQAM.

The South Florida native has also been a studio host for the Miami Dolphins and Florida Panthers and a midday and evening talk show host on WQAM.

Felipe Marques the Miami bureau Chief for *Bloomberg News*, who covers Florida politics, appeared on **May 22** at Wolfson

Campus, 300 N.E. Second Ave. in Room 8106 at 11 a.m.

The Brazilian national has previously served as a wealth reporter for Latin America, covering the region's billionaires, largest banks and hedge funds. He is a graduate of the University of São Paulo.

Photojournalist **Al Diaz**, who has worked at the *Miami Herald* for more than four decades, will speak at the series on **May 31** at Kendall Campus in Room M-239

at 11 a.m.

Diaz has won numerous recognitions since he started his career at the *Herald* in 1983, including the 2014 Humanitarian Award from the National Press Photographers Association and the Associated Press Media Editors Showcase Photo of the Year for capturing an image of the CPR rescue of a baby on a Miami highway.

He has also contributed to two Pulitzer Prize-winning teams,

covering the sudden collapse of Champlain Towers South in Surfside in 2022 and Hurricane Andrew in 1993.

Diaz has a bachelor's degree in journalism with a minor in visual arts from the University of Florida. He started his collegiate journalism career at MDC in the fall of 1976 serving as photographer for *The Catalyst*, the former student newspaper at Kendall Campus.

The final guest of this year's series will be **Bea Hines**, the first Black female reporter at the *Miami Herald*. She has worked as a reporter and columnist for the paper for more than 50 years and got her start in journalism at *The Falcon Times*—the North Campus' student newspaper until 2010—in the late 1960s. The details of her appearance have not been finalized yet.

The MDC Journalism Speaker Series was initiated in February of 2008 to provide students with the opportunity to learn from working journalists. To date, more than 77 journalists have participated in the series.

Interviews are in 25-30 minute intervals and viewers can interact with guests at the end of each presentation during a 15-minute Q&A session.

For more information, contact Manolo Barco at (305) 237-1255 or at mbarco@mdc.edu.

TECHNOLOGY

New Artificial Intelligence Center Unveiled At Wolfson Campus

□ The 5,000-square foot facility features classroom facilities and flexible study spaces that allow students to learn about AI and how it affects fields like business and computer science.

By **Paola Proenza**
paola.proenza001@mymdc.net

Following a \$14 million investment and three years of work, Miami Dade College's second Artificial Intelligence Center is here.

Located in Room 2104 at Wolfson Campus, the 5,000-square foot facility opened its doors on April 18.

Students will be taught how AI operates in fields such as business, computer science and ethics.

"Every field, every industry and every job is going to be disrupted with AI," said Antonio Delgado, the Vice President of Innovation & Tech Partnerships at the College. "We want every student at MDC to have AI skills."

Guests entering the facility are greeted by a blue video column that can project things like images, student projects and advertisements. The entrance features a seating space and an idea incubator glass pod that allows three to four people to meet privately or work on projects.

Inspired by the human brain, the remaining areas of the AI center are divided into a left quadrant featuring classrooms and a right side that has flexible study spaces to entice student creativity.

On the left side of the facility, two



PHOTO COURTESY OF GIORGIO VIERA FROM MDC MEDIA RELATIONS

Emerging Technology: The new Artificial Intelligence Center at Wolfson Campus will teach students how the rapidly growing field of AI is affecting fields like computer science, business and ethics.

classroom spaces each include 25 high-end computers with a dual monitor setup. The areas, which are separated by a glass wall, can be combined.

They will be utilized to teach the College's AI Thinking course, which offers students an introduction to the technology and its ethical implications, and allow students to explore Open AI's ChatGPT and DALL-E

and host hackathon events, webinars and speakers.

The other side of the AI Center houses two additional classrooms that feature more than 10 collaborative desks that can accommodate three people each. They will be used by students working on projects.

Nicolas Camposolaya, a second-year entrepreneurship student at Wolfson

Campus, is using the facility to work on a project that utilizes AI to help students find directions and obtain more information about the campus.

"AI is something that is coming for us, the creators, to be empowered," Camposolaya said. "The most important part of the center is the education [it] can bring to the students."

Next fall, the facility will welcome new programs such as the AI awareness college credit certificate, applied AI associate's in science degree and the applied AI bachelor's degree. All three tracks will teach students how to operate AI to optimize work operations.

In conjunction with the opening of Wolfson's AI Center, MDC launched its Metaversity—a digital platform that allows students to use virtual reality technology to complete college tours and virtual classes.

Developed in less than six months through VictoryRX—a company that offers classroom and campus models for VR use—the platform includes VR representations of Wolfson's Business Innovation & Technology Center and Medical Campus' nursing facilities.

It will also create virtual environments that allow students in fields such as biology or pre-medicine to perform simulated dissections through VR headsets.

"We want to embrace this virtual world and these emerging technologies with education," said Chechu Lasheras, the executive director of emerging technologies at MDCTech.

JAZZ AT WOLFSON

Jazz At Wolfson Presents Series Creator Steps Down After 25 Years

□ Michael Di Liddo, who started the *Jazz At Wolfson Presents* series in 1998, is stepping down as the program's director in July. He is retiring from Miami Dade College in December after 37 years at the college.

By **Juan S. Gomez**
juan.gomez070@mymdc.net

Fourteen years into his teaching career, jazz professor Michael Di Liddo was searching for a tool outside of the classroom to captivate students.

Determined to make a change, Di Liddo reached out to New York City jazz musicians in hopes of creating a year-long program that featured free performances at Wolfson Campus.

Jazz At Wolfson Presents was launched in 1998.

Twenty-five years later, the series has hosted more than 250 Jazz musicians including notable artists such as four-time Grammy-award winner John Riley, Boston-based guitarist Mike Stern and legendary jazz saxophonist, the late James Moody.

Di Liddo, who has fostered the program into the longest-tenured free jazz series in Miami-Dade County, is stepping down as the initiative's director in July.

He is retiring from the College in December after 37 years.

"I felt like I had done everything that I could do to make the jazz program strong," Di Liddo said. "It's time to turn it over to someone else for new ideas."

Lifelong Passion

Di Liddo was born in February of 1958 in Brooklyn, New York. His first musical milestone was when he saw The Beatles perform on the Ed Sullivan Show on TV when he was six.

"I remember watching this thing with my mouth wide open," Di Liddo said, "Music like that hadn't been played. It was very infectious."



BRIANNA ACEVEDO / THE REPORTER

A Dedicated Life: Michael Di Liddo, a jazz professor at Wolfson Campus, will stop directing the *Jazz At Wolfson Present* series after creating the program 25 years ago. He is set to retire from the College this December.

Tantalized by the British band's rock music, Di Liddo committed his life to music.

After spending some time in Long Island, his family moved to Hollywood, Florida when he was 13.

During his time at Coconut Creek High School, Di Liddo formed a rock band called Rain. He was the group's guitarist.

After graduating from high school, Di Liddo moved to Stuttgart, Germany after enlisting in the United States Army Band. Four years later, he returned to the U.S. to study music at Florida Atlantic University.

Once he earned his bachelor's degree in 1984, Di Liddo began teaching music appreciation classes at Palm Beach State College while he worked on a doctorate degree in music at the University of Miami. During his time at UM, he began teaching part-time at MDC in 1985.

After stints as an adjunct music professor at UM, MDC, Broward College and Palm

Beach State College, Di Liddo was hired as a full-time jazz professor at Wolfson Campus in 1998.

At MDC, Di Liddo teaches jazz history and instructs his students to improvise and arrange jazz melodies through five-person ensembles.

"His art is his strength," said Rosa Mayorga, the arts and philosophy department chair at Wolfson Campus. "When he plays a particular piece you can see his enjoyment."

Lasting Legacy

During his four-decade-long teaching career, Di Liddo has influenced the lives of hundreds of students.

In 2008, Kemuel Roig considered abandoning his promising musical career because he was unsure he could make a living doing what he loved.

But Di Liddo convinced Roig to continue

pursuing his passion. Today, the 34-year-old is a renowned jazz pianist who has toured internationally and performed with artists like Arturo Sandoval, Al Di Meola and Giovanni Hidalgo.

"[Di Liddo] made me realize the blessing I actually had in my hands, and gave me the courage to keep going forward," said Roig, who was featured at the *Jazz at Wolfson Presents* in October.

For the past year, Di Liddo has prepared Wolfson Campus adjunct professor Mark Small to take the reins of the *Jazz At Wolfson Presents* series.

The Grammy award-winning jazz saxophonist and composer has performed on Broadway, the Sydney Opera House and Madison Square Garden. He's also composed for musicians like Rozana Amed and Michael Bublé.

At MDC, Small has reserved venues, secured artists, scheduled events, organized rehearsals and promoted the series through the College's public relations team. He hopes to offer outdoor events and free food at each performance.

"Our main goal is community outreach and fostering a knowledge of jazz," Small said.

During retirement, Di Liddo plans to continue being active in the jazz music scene.

As he has done so for the past 31 years, Di Liddo will continue directing and playing the guitar for the quartet at Broward County's North Creek Presbyterian Church.

In August, Di Liddo is reuniting with his high school band for their 50-year anniversary.

He also plans to travel, visiting Germany, Italy and Spain and spending time at his log home in Andrews, North Carolina, where he has a collection of antique radios, fans and clocks.

"I'm going to miss him greatly," said Irene Munoz, who serves as the College's interim director of communications and promotes the *Jazz At Wolfson Present* series through email and social media marketing campaigns. "He's a consummate professional, professor and artist."

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Professor To Retire After Three Decade-Long Teaching Career At MDC

English professor Ivonne Lamazares is retiring in August after more than 30 years at Miami Dade College. Lamazares serves as co-advisor to *Café Cultura*, the literary arts magazine at Hialeah Campus.

By **Juan S. Gomez and Nikole Valiente**

juan.gomez070@mymdc.net

When Nerys Torralbas started her academic endeavors at Miami Dade College, she had her sights set on becoming an optometrist.

That was the plan—until she joined *Café Cultura*, the literary arts magazine at Hialeah Campus.

Within a year, Torralbas was the publication's editor-in-chief and she switched her major to English after realizing writing was her passion.

Thirteen years later, Torralbas credits *Café Cultura* co-advisor Ivonne Lamazares for guiding her toward her calling.

"She really helped me [and] always saw potential in me," said Torralbas, who currently serves as the associate director of Learning Resources at Hialeah Campus. "She really made that push for me to make that first step."

Torralbas is one of the hundreds of students Lamazares has influenced during her three decades at Miami Dade College. In August, the 61-year-old English professor is slated to retire.

"I'm retiring now because, although I love teaching, I want to have more time with my family," said Lamazares, whose husband Steve Kronen retired from MDC in 2021 after serving as a librarian at West Campus for 14 years.

Love What You Do

Lamazares was born in March of 1962 in Havana, Cuba. She was raised by her grandparents; her mom passed away when she was three and three years later, her dad left for the United States.

When she was 13, Lamazares and her grandparents moved to Spain for three months before immigrating to Hialeah.

"Migrating was both, I would say liberating since it gave me a lot of opportunities I wouldn't have had in Cuba, but it was also traumatic," Lamazares said. "I didn't know what I was doing."

When she arrived in the U.S., Lamazares was pushed back two academic years because she didn't speak English. She used that setback as fuel to master the English language.

At Hialeah Senior High School, the teenager practiced English by singing the songs she heard on the radio and reading her textbooks methodically.

A few years later, Lamazares found her passion for teaching by working as a tutor at the North Campus writing center.

"I remember tutoring an older man who had come back to school, and I was teaching him how to write an effective paragraph and I realized...this is what I want to do for the rest of my life," Lamazares said. "It was just so fulfilling."

Two years after graduating from North Campus Lamazares earned a bachelor's degree in English



BRIANNA ACEVEDO / THE REPORTER

Goodbye: Following a three decade long teaching career at Miami Dade College, English professor Ivonne Lamazares is retiring in August.

from Barry University in 1984. One year later, she earned a master's in English from Florida International University.

In 1986, Lamazares began working as an English professor at North Campus. She encouraged students to dissect novels by John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway and Virginia Woolf during class discussions.

"[Professor Lamazares] is someone who is very patient and believes in the potential of everyone," Torralbas said. "She's very kind, patient, warm, and always wants to push you to dig deeper as a student and as a critical thinker."

But after 17 years at North Campus, Lamazares took a job teaching creative writing at the University of Central Florida.

However, six years later, Lamazares had an epiphany: Her mission was to educate the community that raised her.

She returned to South Florida in 2007 to teach English at Hialeah Campus.

"I just wanted to come home," Lamazares said.

Passion Project

Less than a year later, Lamazares and English professor Victor Calderin joined forces to create *Café Cultura*.

"It was grassroots. We were looking [for] students who wanted to get their work out there," Calderin said. "We really had to learn everything from scratch because we had never done anything like a magazine before."

To help with the process, Lamazares and Calderin reached out to Marta Magellan, who at the time served as advisor to the Kendall Campus literary magazine, *Miambiance*.

With Magellan's help and the publications' first designer, John Muñiz, the duo taught students

how to lay out the magazine, establish deadlines and promote *Café Cultura*.

The hard work paid off. In the summer of 2008, the magazine published 1,000 copies of its inaugural volume. It featured 64 pages bonded together in a saddle stitch style. The volume's theme honored the campus' coffee culture.

Since its creation, *Café Cultura* has earned three Crown Awards from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association and dozens of awards from the Florida College System Publications Association.

One of Lamazares' students more than three decades ago—Kennedy Everett, now an English professor at Hialeah Campus—will fill her role at the magazine.

"[*Café Cultura*] fulfilled what I want to do as an educator, which is to mentor students and help them find their paths, express themselves and be creative," Lamazares said.

Happy Retirement

Outside of the classroom Lamazares has proven to be a prolific writer.

Twenty-two years ago, she published her debut novel *The Sugar Island*. It's a coming-of-age story that follows the life of Tanya, a five-year-old who flees Fidel Castro's political regime in Cuba in the 1960s.

The story, which was inspired by Lamazares' personal immigration journey, has been translated into seven languages.

"I wanted to write about my childhood," Lamazares said. "It was kind of, you know, an act of translation to write about your childhood now as an adult."

Lamazares has also published short stories and non-fiction for *Latina Magazine*, *The Southern Review* and *A Century of Cuban Writers in Florida*—an anthology

of Cuban writers which includes Felix Varela and José Martí.

Her work has earned her three Florida art fellowships and a National Endowment for the Arts grant.

During retirement, Lamazares plans to publish a second novel—*The House of Ruth*. The book is about two sisters who reunite in Cuba after growing up in different cultural environments.

Lamazares also plans to volunteer as a tutor for Miami-Dade

County Public Schools and travel to Japan, Germany, Chile and New York.

"I want her to do everything that she's ever wanted to do," said Lourdes Gonzales who served as editor-in-chief of *Café Cultura* five years ago. "She deserves more than anyone else to just be joyful and have time to do anything she wants."

Staff writer Olivia Valkenburg contributed to this story.



PHOTO COURTESY OF IVONNE LAMAZARES

Inspiration: Nerys Torralbas (pictured at left), the associate director of Learning Resources at Hialeah Campus, credits English professor Ivonne Lamazares (pictured at right) for helping her find her passion for writing ten years ago.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Podcast Highlights The Educational Journey Of Non-Traditional Students

□ Yane Nemeroff, a speech and communications professor at Hialeah Campus, launched The Non-Traditional Scholar Podcast in March to inspire students to overcome educational barriers.

By Paola Proenza
paola.proenza001@mymdc.net

Yane Nemeroff was at a crossroads.

After struggling to raise his second child, Nemeroff, who was studying hospitality and tourism at Broward College, dropped out of school to work full-time at Publix.

Four years later, the then-homeless 24-year-old realized he needed to make a change; he re-enrolled at Broward College to pursue an associate's degree in intercultural and organizational communication.

Now a speech and communications professor at Hialeah Campus, the 40-year-old is using his story to inspire others. On March 31, he released The Non-Traditional Scholar Podcast on Spotify to help students navigate the educational system.

The first episode discusses how non-traditional students can traverse the educational landscape by obtaining help from college advisors, tutors and librarians.

To date, the podcast has created eight more episodes. The episodes are released weekly. Topics range from discussions about overcoming educational obstacles to how students can benefit from



ERIKA VALCARCEL / THE REPORTER

Overcoming Obstacles: Yane Nemeroff, a Hialeah Campus speech and communications professor, started the Non-Traditional Scholar Podcast in March to share his story and assist students in their educational journey.

resources at their institution.

"My podcast is another opportunity to see how you can connect to somebody, even though at first glance, you might think that they have no commonality with you whatsoever," said Nemeroff, who's been teaching at Hialeah Campus since 2015.

Nemeroff's wife, Lesley Gonzalez, came up with the idea to create the podcast after she attended one of his Reroute, Return and Redemption events at Hialeah Campus.

"It hit me like a ton of bricks,"

said Gonzalez, who was a hairdresser for nine years before returning to college to earn an associate's degree in psychology from Hialeah Campus last year. "Every time I went to the event it was very impactful but I always felt I wanted more."

The podcast is a TEDx Talk-styled event in which guest speakers discuss how they overcame challenges such as raising children, dealing with unsupportive parents and being undocumented.

To kick-start the series, Nemeroff reserved a space at Learning

Resources at Hialeah Campus. He utilizes lapel microphones and his own phone to do audio recordings.

Nemeroff's guests are people whose educational paths weren't a smooth transition from high school to college.

The only exceptions were episodes two and five, where Nemeroff spoke about his path to becoming a college professor while raising his two children.

Episodes last 45 to 60 minutes and guests talk candidly about the trials and tribulations they have faced. A recent episode featured

Medical Campus Student Government Association President Arturo Ortiz, who at the time served in the same capacity at Hialeah Campus. He discussed his struggle as an undocumented college student.

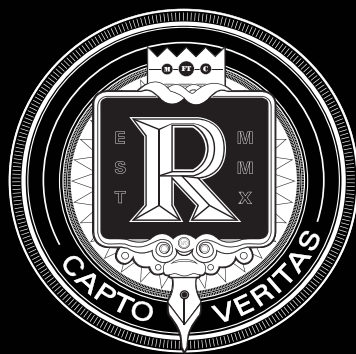
"I think it has shined a light and given a voice, again, to the non-traditional route," Ortiz said. "It kind of helps highlight the fact that the college journey is not a one size fits all."

Other people featured in the podcast include Gloria Rodriguez—a pizza restaurant owner in Miami Lakes who is studying to become a teacher at Hialeah Campus—and Kelly Hernandez, a writing coach at Medical Campus who went from working in a factory to attending Georgetown University.

After Nemeroff conducts the interviews, he polishes the voice recordings through Adobe's Enhance Speech software. Then, he uses Spotify's podcast creator software to add music to the audio before sending the final product to the guests for their final approval.

Nemeroff is applying for a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities to purchase new microphones, soundproofing walls, video equipment and a green screen to turn the podcast into a video series.

"I hope this can reach as many people as possible," Nemeroff said. "It can serve as an initiative to connect people that feel like college passed them by and inspire them to realize they still have a chance."



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MEN'S BASEBALL

Sharks Lose Two Of Three Games At State Tournament In Lakeland

□ The team dropped two of three games in Lakeland, Florida at the State Tournament from May 12-14 to end their season. Miami Dade College finished with a 34-16 mark this season.

By **Juan S. Gomez**
juan.gomez070@mymdc.net

The Miami Dade College baseball team's journey for a national title ended at the State Tournament in Lakeland.

After winning their first game—4-3—versus State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota on May 12, the Sharks lost the next two games versus the College of Central Florida and Northwest Florida State College.

Miami Dade College finished the season with a 34-16-1 record including a 15-6 mark in Southern Conference play.

"It sucks to finish this way but that's just a part of life," said Sharks right fielder Wooyeoul Shin. "We can't have everything we want but we came pretty far."

In the first game, the Sharks were paced by their ace, Herick Hernandez. The left-hander allowed three runs in 5.1 innings and struck out five batters. Relievers Miguel Gonzalez and Julian Hernandez added 3.1 scoreless innings.

The game ended in dramatic



YAIRI LORENZO / THE REPORTER

End Of The Road: The 2022-23 Miami Dade College baseball team posted a 34-16-1 mark this season but they were eliminated from the State Tournament after losing two of three games in Lakeland in mid-May.

fashion in the ninth-inning with the bases loaded when second baseman Joseph Zamora beat out a double play and the Sharks walked off with a 4-3 win versus the Manatees.

On May 13, the Sharks bats went cold in a 6-0 loss to the College of Central Florida. Relievers Carlos Nolasco and Gonzalez allowed

three runs in 0.1 innings of work to set up the elimination game on Sunday.

In that game, Northwest Florida State College roughed up Sharks starter Ervis Solis. The left-hander was knocked out of the game, lasting only 0.2 innings and surrendering three runs.

Offensively, the Sharks bats

were sharp. Shin led the MDC offense with three RBI and two hits, Zamora added two RBI and two hits and center fielder Max Galvin had two singles. After falling behind 8-4 in the sixth inning, the Sharks mounted a comeback. They picked up two runs in the seventh and one in the ninth but fell just short, losing to the Raiders 8-7.

"We had a rough last few games," Hernandez said. "[But] we were focused and played as a team."

The Sharks struggled with consistency at the start of the 2022-23 season. They were 5-5-1 but eventually put things together winning 29 of their last 40 games including four winning streaks of at least four games.

Offensively the Sharks were led by a quartet of sophomores.

Shin had a monstrous season, hitting 15 home runs, producing 47 RBI and a .407 batting average and .772 slugging percentage. Shortstop Jose Hernandez had 11 home runs and 44 RBI, Galvin added six home runs, 41 RBI and a .400 batting average and Zamora contributed four homeruns, 33 RBI and a .326 batting average.

Freshman D'Angelo Ortiz, the son of former Red Sox legend David Ortiz, posted a .328 batting average and added 38 RBI.

Hernandez led the pitching staff with an 8-3 record, 90 strikeouts and a 2.86 earned run average. He was selected as the Southern Conference Pitcher of The Year. Reliever Kader Rabagh was 5-4 with 43 strikeouts and a .276 ERA.

Shin and Herick Hernandez were all selected First Team All-State. Galvin was selected to the second team.

Sharks Head Coach Adrian Morales was named the Southern Conference Coach of The Year.

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// SPORTS

Juan S. Gomez, Sports Editor // ☎ (305) 237-2715 // ✉ juan.gomez070@mymdc.net

WOMEN'S SOFTBALL

Lady Sharks End Season With Seven-Game Losing Streak

□ The Miami Dade College softball team finished the season with a 14-26 record and a 2-12 mark in Southern Conference play. They had 15 fewer overall wins than the previous year.

By **Juan S. Gomez**
juan.gomez070@mymdc.net

After a promising 11-5 start, the Miami Dade College softball team lost 21 of their last 24 games to finish the season with a 14-26 mark.

The Lady Sharks had three losing streaks of at least six games and ended the season on a seven-game slide. They won 15 fewer games than the previous season.

Their best stretch was from Feb. 3 through Feb. 17 when they won eight of eleven games including a five-game winning streak, the team's biggest of the season.

"I think we had a good, bonding team," said Beatriz Narazaki, the team's starting catcher. "Although we lost a lot, we did have fun together."

Despite the losses, the Lady Sharks also had some bright spots.

Right-hander Vicky Navarro led the pitching staff with a 6-8 mark, a 2.91 earned run average and 49

strikeouts. In two seasons at MDC, Navarro won 22 games and struck out 157 batters.

The sophomore was also potent with the bat. Navarro was second on the team with a .344 batting average this season while contributing 17 RBI and a team-leading nine doubles.

"I had a little bit of a rocky start," Navarro said. "As we went on I got out of my head and then I was able to push through and play to the best of my ability."

Narazaki, who shared catching duties as a freshman, had a breakout season for the Lady Sharks. She led the team with a .373 batting average, 26 RBI and four triples and was third on the squad with six doubles.

Sophomore pitchers Ashlyn Blanchard and Mckenna Thompson each won four games.

Two freshmen—outfielder Taylor Clayton and first baseman Alexis Ortega—also played prominent roles.

Ortega had a team-leading three home runs and added 18 RBI, seven doubles and a .274 to the Lady Sharks offensive attack.

Clayton contributed a .316 batting average, 21 RBI, seven doubles and three triples.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUBIANKA BALTODANO / KENDALL CAMPUS MEDIA SERVICES

Tough Season: The Lady Sharks endured a down season, posting a 14-26 record including a 2-12 mark in Southern Conference Play.



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CHARACTER ANALYSIS

The Evil Of Money And Power—A Character Analysis of HBO's *Succession*

□ Hailed as one of HBO's best TV shows, the dark comedy takes on the corruption and absurdity of corporate America. With its ending close, it's time to unravel the show's family dynamic.

By **Nicole Del Rio**
nicole.delrio002@mymdc.net

HBO's *Succession* has enraptured critics and audiences alike since its 2018 debut.

Having earned 13 Emmy Awards and a cult-like following, fans can't get enough of the show's gripping writing, powerful acting and unforgettable characters.

For those unfamiliar with the series, *Succession* follows aging media mogul Logan Roy and his international media conglomerate, Waystar Royco, as Roy's four children—Kendall, Roman, Siobhan and Connor—grapple to take over their father's empire.

Throughout the show, all of Roy's children are haunted by the trauma inflicted by their cold and manipulative father, who instilled a "you have to be a killer" attitude that encourages them to obtain power through any means necessary.

With its fourth and final season hitting the airwaves, fans of the series are preparing to say goodbye to the satirical drama. As the end of the saga nears and the battle to gain control of Waystar Royco intensifies, it's time to take a deeper look into the characters that made *Succession* so memorable.

Logan Roy

Recalling his humble beginnings in Scotland, Logan deeply resents the cushy life his four children have had from the profitability and success of his own work.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HBO ENTERTAINMENT

Corporate Corruption: As the Roy family battles for control of international media conglomerate Waystar Royco, *Succession* demonstrates how money and power can tear families apart.

While Logan displays a caring demeanor toward his children to the outside world, viewers are exposed to his rampant emotional abuse and narcissism behind closed doors.

The show alludes to how Logan, who grew up in an abusive household, sees his abuse as a way to develop the same stoicism that helped him dominate the business world.

As one of the most powerful men in the media, Logan has everything he would ever want at the palm of his hands. However, his power is so insurmountable that none of his children have the qualifications or experience to be a successful heir to Waystar Royco.

Kendall Roy

Kendall, the most likely heir of Logan's empire, is self-destructive

and impulsive.

Like a spoiled prince, Kendall claims he is ready to ascend to his father's throne and refuses to take no for an answer. As the eldest sibling, he often asserts himself as the leader, even though his father is always the one pulling the strings.

As someone who craves his father's approval, Kendall always comes back to Logan, even after a series of betrayals, hoping that he will one day become the favorite child.

Logan, who sees Kendall as too weak and emotional, finds every opportunity to psychologically torment his son so he can control him.

Roman Roy

Second in line is Roman Roy, who is the only sibling we see

receive physical abuse on screen.

Through his dark sense of humor, Roman often pokes fun at an otherwise cutthroat and dark corporate world. However, although Roman likes to play court jester, there is more to him than meets the eye.

As the series progresses, so does his knowledge of the business world. He begins to understand the importance of making connections and unexpected power plays.

Knowing that his father will always dismiss him due to his struggles with mental illness and lack of maturity, Roman finds other ways to prove himself worthy of being successor.

Siobhan "Shiv" Roy

As the youngest child and only daughter, Shiv is tired of being

overlooked due to her gender and age.

This makes her one of the best-written modern female characters in TV history. She shows how women continue to struggle to be seen as more than superficial "girl bosses" who are taunted for bringing diversity.

Logan's constant patriarchal pressures makes Shiv want to prove him wrong and in turn ignore her emotions. This makes Logan constantly test Shiv so he can see how far she is willing to go to prove herself.

Like her father, Shiv forms relationships based on what she can gain rather than on an emotional connection. With a husband that depends on her to keep his position at Waystar Royco, she tries to assume the role of puppet master despite her lack of emotional intelligence.

Connor Roy

Tabbed as the forgotten one, Connor is the eldest son from Logan's first marriage.

After being abandoned during his childhood by Logan, he became a fleeting afterthought. His mother, Logan's first wife, was condemned to a mental institution after the divorce, scarring Connor for life. Due to the significant age gap with the other Roy siblings, he struggles to connect with them.

Despite his attempts to be a parental figure, even his siblings reject him because they are too distracted trying to take over Logan's empire. As the least ambitious, Connor has never had a job until he decides to run for president.

As the punching bag of the family, Connor's self-esteem crumbles to the point where he becomes the only one in the family who rejects Waystar Royco and wants to forge his own path.

COACHELLA

Frank Ocean's Coachella Performance Was A Complete Letdown

□ The artist's appearance during the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in California left fans disappointed because of a cancellation and poor event planning.

By **Temiloluwa Alagbe**
Temiloluwa.Alagbe001@mymdc.net

The Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in Indio, California has finally come to a close.

As the country's biggest music and arts festival, the event brought entertainment to thousands of spectators from April 12 to 23.

While Coachella is a trending site for celebrities and influencers to unwind and showcase their style, the festival is known for its music scene.

That is why the high admission prices and heat didn't stop fans from flocking to the valley to enjoy performances by artists like Kali Uchis, Bad Bunny, BLACKPINK, and Frank Ocean.

Despite the festival's success, Frank Ocean did not have a good run.

A week after his first appearance on April 16, the New Orleans native canceled his Sunday performance leaving fans shocked and frustrated.

Considering that this was his first appearance at the festival since 2012, fans expected more. Especially when Ocean was set to sing songs from his albums—*Blonde* and *Endless*.

His cancellation was said to be due to a



ANTHONY MARTINEZ / THE REPORTER

A Flop: Singer Frank Ocean's lackluster performance and a cancellation during the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in April left fans disappointed.

leg injury Ocean suffered the week prior. But some fans suspect Ocean is making an excuse and bailed on the show because of the online backlash he received after his first performance.

That set started an hour late. His team blamed that on the stage not being ready for his performance. When he arrived, the stage was said to be incomplete and the crew scrambled to put it together.

YouTube and Coachella did not stream Ocean's set for online users to watch, however, a fan named Morgan Lee live-streamed the performance on her Instagram page @morgandoesntcare.

Fans described the performance as a listening party in which Ocean lip-synced parts of the songs. Some of the audience members said they could barely see him due to the poor stage design.

On top of everything, Ocean ended his show at 12:25 a.m. in stark violation of the city's 11 p.m. curfew rule.

Days later, Ocean canceled his highly-anticipated evening performance scheduled for April 23. The rock band Blink 182 performed in his place.

Ocean should consider how his actions affect his fan base. That way, situations like these don't happen again.

Nicole Del Rio, A&E Editor // ☎ (305) 237-1254 // ✉ nicole.delrio002@mymdc.net

VIDEO GAME THROWBACK

15 Years Later, *Grand Theft Auto IV* Is Still Rockstar's Undisputed Masterpiece

Released on April 29, 2008, the open-world game, set in a fictional depiction of New York City continues to be the gold standard for video game storytelling and gameplay.

By **Juan S. Gomez**
juan.gomez070@mymdc.net

Ever since its inception in 1997, the *Grand Theft Auto* video game series has captivated a global audience.

The Rockstar Games franchise has produced titles like *GTA San Andreas*—often tabbed as the best game ever—and *GTA V*, which is the third highest-selling game in history with 175 million copies sold since 2013.

While each game in the franchise has always been praised for its open worlds and narrative, many fans and critics often neglect *GTA IV*.

Released in the middle of the Great Recession in April of 2008, the sixth installment of the series is an underrated masterpiece due to its profound story and realistic gameplay.

On April 29, the game will celebrate its 15th anniversary, reminding us that video games can serve as a medium to convey the complexity of our human experience.

Heartfelt Narrative

Set in Liberty City, a fictional



Masterpiece: *GTA IV* remains the best installment in the *Grand Theft Auto* series due to its excellent gameplay and deep storytelling.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROCKSTAR GAMES

depiction of New York City, *GTA IV* follows the story of Niko Bellic—a Serbian immigrant who arrives in the United States in search of a new life.

After settling with his cousin, Roman, Niko quickly embroils himself in the criminal underworld to save his cousin from debt. Soon, he begins to form relationships with gangsters and mafia bosses as he rises up in the criminal underworld.

While all of this takes place, we see glimpses of Niko's somber and cynical personality as he recalls his traumatic memories during

the 1990s Yugoslav War and his desire to leave crime.

This is the first thing that makes *GTA IV* special. While other series glorify crime through satire and over-the-top jokes, this rendition gives us a thoughtful and realistic look at the misery of living a life of violence.

Aside from this, the game also shows us the devastating consequences of revenge.

Near the end of the game, we learn that Niko went to the U.S. to find a former comrade who betrayed him and his unit in an ambush during the war.

After finding him and learning he betrayed his friends for drug money, players are left with the choice to let him live or kill him to fulfill Niko's thirst for revenge.

That was the most emotional part of the game for me because either choice will remind you of the futility of revenge.

Revolutionary Gameplay

To complement its storyline, *GTA IV* features a gritty visual gradient that's mostly devoid of color.

While many criticize the game's gray aura, the stylistic choice from

the game's developers makes perfect sense considering the dark nature of the game's story and setting.

Another aspect of the game's mechanics that is undervalued is its physics engine, which even after 15 years, continues to be one of the best in gaming.

As opposed to *GTA V*, the car handling in *GTA IV* feels more akin to real life than to Mario Kart. Each vehicle has a different rate of acceleration and handling depending on its size and weight.

The physics engine, as well as other minor details like NPC interactions, combat and other rag doll mechanics, make *GTA IV* the most immersive and realistic rendition in the series yet.

GTA IV's immersion is further complemented by the setting itself. One thing players will quickly notice about Liberty City is how many side characters with unique missions Niko encounters.

The city's inhabitants also have a life of their own.

Like NYC, Liberty City features historic neighborhoods with clusters of Russian, Hispanic and Asian culture.

While we continue to wait for the release of the long-awaited *GTA VI* that's set to take place in Miami, every gaming fan should revisit Liberty City to unravel Rockstar Games' undisputed magnum opus.

MUSEUMS

Here Are Three Local Art Museums Worth Visiting

With the Miami art scene continuing to expand each year, *The Reporter's* Colleen Padron offers her list of top art museums to visit in the city's metropolitan area.

By **Colleen Padron**
Colleen.padron001@mymdc.net

Now that summer is nearly here, many Miami natives will start to wonder how they can make the best out of their staycations.

One way to take advantage of this newly found free time is to visit a local museum or exhibition with friends or loved ones. Here are three local choices you can visit to satisfy your love for art.

Paradox Museum

Want to spice up your Instagram? Paradox Museum, located at 2301 N. Miami Ave. in Wynwood, has become one of the most popular selfie destinations.

From its moving block hallways to a "tilted" antigravity room, you will definitely encounter some mind-blowing moments.

But Paradox is more than just a selfie museum, each exhibit explains the science behind the illusion with accompanying music



BRIANNA ACEVEDO / THE REPORTER

and a talking piano. This piano itself is an engaging AI device that converses with guests and takes music requests.

The museum is relatively new—Miami is one of only four locations in the United States. The goal is to encourage learning through the senses and create special experiences for museum-goers. With more than 70 interactive exhibits, this is one you shouldn't miss.

It's open Monday to Thursday from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m., Fridays from 12 p.m. to 7 p.m., Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Cost is \$26 for adults.

Rubell Museum

Located in Allapattah at 100 NW 23rd St, the Rubell Museum offers a cozy array of contemporary

art at a site that once served as a warehouse.

Exhibits include paintings and sculptures belonging to New York-based surrealist and impressionist painter Clayton Schiff, contemporary sculptors Patricia Ayres and Alexandre Diop, and a Franco-Senegalese artist who utilizes metal, textiles, latex and animal fibers in his art.

Another popular exhibit includes the Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Room and Narcissus Garden, which features an array of steel spheres and mirrors.

The venue also includes an indoor and outdoor Basque restaurant, LAKU, which leads into a beautiful garden and a permanent exhibit of works from Keith Haring, a pop art painter who advocated for AIDS and LGBT awareness through his pieces.

Open on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and on Friday and Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Entry to the museum is \$15 for adults.

Superblue Miami

Located at 1101 N.W. 23 St. and accessible via Brightline's Miami Central Station, Superblue Miami features gorgeous light-based digital displays that captivate audiences.

Described by *The New York Times* as "Trippy, Meditative, Gorgeous," Superblue Miami allows guests to immerse themselves in the world of digital art. Featuring a mirrored maze and multiple crafted digital works, the museum gives you the feel of stepping into a new world.

Their newest installation, *Pulse Topology* features the sound of heartbeats and 3,000 suspended light bulbs, uniting visual and audio, to create a unique artistic experience.

An interesting \$12 add-on experience is the *Massless Clouds Between Sculpture and Life*, which offers guests a chance to become immersed in the work as visitors interact with clouds made out of soap bubbles. The installation is constantly changing to ensure each experience is unique.

Adult tickets are \$36, but Florida Residents pay \$29 with a valid ID. Hours are Monday to Thursday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Superblue Miami is closed the first Tuesday of each month for maintenance.



REPORTER FILE PHOTO / DANNA QUINTERO

WORK UNIONS

The Importance Of Unions In The Workplace

□ *The Reporter's* Tomas Lara provides an overview of labor unions to emphasize how they can advocate for workers' rights, better wages and job security.



By **Tomas Lara**
tomas.lara001@mymdc.net

It's likely you've heard about the waves of unionization attempts throughout the nation.

From airports to zoos, unions appear to be on the rise. What does that mean for the average worker?

A union is a collective group of employees that work to preserve and expand worker rights and benefits. This is often accomplished through negotiation and communication between union representatives and employers.

While most unions work seamlessly, a failure of communication between a union and an employer can lead to strikes which hinder a company's productivity or even damage the economy.

Early unions were horrifying



AIMEE SALVADOR / THE REPORTER

undertakings. Without legal alternatives, workers set fire to factories, blew up machines, and occupied workplaces. In some cases state militias or even company mercenaries got involved and workers were killed fighting for their rights.

Thanks to their sacrifice we now have legal and nonviolent ways of unionizing.

In fact, setting up a union in your workplace is very straightforward.

The first and most essential step is to communicate with your workers to establish a support network, discuss benefits and develop organization.

Once you've discussed forming a union with your coworkers, the next step is to speak with a union organizer.

Although not necessary to establish a union, experienced organizers can help the process go by easier. In Florida, we have

organizations such as the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees—which have represented workers since the Great Depression.

Once you are ready, the third step is to set up a committee with your coworkers and begin the voting union process. Florida requires at least 30 percent of your workplace to sign a union card before the petition is sent to the National Labor Relations Board

for approval.

If all goes well, you will have created a strong union that will represent your interests as a worker by advocating for safer workplace conditions, higher wages, paid leave, job security and protection from discrimination.

Unionizing, however, is still not a completely safe process.

Many companies continue to fight tooth and nail to keep workers from unionizing—even if this right is protected by law.

While these companies aren't using armed militia anymore, they do engage in union-busting tactics such as terminating the contracts of union leaders, preventing employees from discussing pay and unionization or giving docking hours as punishment.

If this happens, the best thing you can do as a worker is contact the NLRB. Already, companies like Starbucks have been under fire by the organization for their unethical union-busting tactics.

Unions are an extremely important tool for us to employ in the workforce. They can help us open communication between employees and employers and help secure essential worker rights.

Even if you are making minimum wage or feel like it's not worth the risk and effort, think of your coworkers and the people who rely on these jobs to live.

You have nothing to lose but your eleven dollars-an-hour position.

IMMIGRATION

Approval Of SB 1718 Is An Attack On Human Dignity

□ Ron DeSantis' push for highly restrictive immigration legislation in Florida highlights our need as a nation to focus on bi-partisan and reasonable solutions to solve immigration issues.



By **Juan S. Gomez**
juan.gomez070@mymdc.net

Ron DeSantis is back at it again.

The Florida governor, who has earned a controversial reputation for his stance on COVID-19 and education, has set his sights on another deeply contentious issue—immigration.

On May 10, DeSantis signed a comprehensive immigration bill, SB 1718, into law. It will negatively impact the lives of the estimated 800,000 undocumented immigrants who live in Florida.

Rather than strive for bi-partisan reform, the governor created policies that hurt everyone and benefit no one.

As someone who was undocumented, I believe DeSantis' approach is misguided.

One of the most controversial stipulations in the bill includes the allocation of \$12 million to



ANTHONY MARTINEZ / THE REPORTER

the state's immigrant relocation program.

This will expand DeSantis' initiative to send undocumented immigrants to other states. Something he has already done to further his political agenda.

Undocumented or not, treating any human being as mere pawns in a political game is deeply unethical. Aside from this, the new legislation will also yield harsher punishment for small businesses that hire undocumented immigrants.

Denying the opportunity for

immigrant communities to contribute to society would be catastrophic for the economy; many of the farmworkers in the agricultural industry are undocumented.

Undocumented immigrants who have a driver's license from another state will also no longer be able to drive legally in Florida.

Denying an immigrant the privilege to drive will not stop them from doing so. The passing of this bill will only generate more unlicensed and uninsured drivers, making our roads less safe.

In the realm of education, the

bill initially proposed to remove a law that allows undocumented immigrants to receive in-state tuition.

Without that help, it would have been impossible for me to attend Miami Dade College.

That would have made it impossible for me to serve as the editor-in-chief of *The Reporter*, participate in several other clubs, graduate with honors and earn a full-ride scholarship to attend Duke University next fall. The aforementioned points are all an attack on the undocumented community,

but it gets worse.

As part of the new legislation, any hospital in the state would be obligated to collect information about a patient's immigration status.

That means an emergency visit to the hospital will be met with hesitancy, something that will trigger a loss of lives for fear of deportation.

Immigration has become such a politicized issue that we've gone to these lengths to make a political point.

Illegal immigration affects every aspect of society, therefore, we should put aside our political differences to provide a reasonable solution to this complicated issue.

While it may not be right to enter the United States illegally, we shouldn't treat undocumented immigrants as third-class citizens.

Most people who come here illegally do so because of safety and economic issues in their native country. They aspire for opportunities to make a good life for their family.

You can argue that people need to get in line and do the process legally. However, when it takes years for the immigration process to play out, it's easy to see why people who don't have time to spare come here illegally.

Rather than dishing out severe punishment to a community that is already battered by circumstance, our nation should focus on the real enemy—our outdated and deeply inefficient immigration system.

// FORUM

Juan S. Gomez, Forum Editor // ☎ (305) 237-2715 // ✉ juan.gomez070@mymdc.net

RENT CONTROL

Home Rental Prices In Miami Are Spiraling Out Of Control

☐ *The Reporter's* Hugo Guillen recounts his experience with Miami's soaring rental prices to emphasize the need for more affordable housing units.



By **Hugo Guillen**
hugo.guillen002@mymdc.net

When I first arrived in Miami two years ago, my family paid \$1,200 each month for our two-bedroom apartment.

Today, the same space costs \$1,800 per month.

Despite the 50 percent increase in rent, the building and its surrounding area are not offering anything new.

This city-wide phenomenon made me ask this question: What

does Miami offer that makes it so expensive?

As one of the major immigration hubs in the United States, South Florida's metropolis serves as the new home for countless people from all around the world.

That constant influx of immigrants is what makes rent prices in Miami soar. Landlords are aware that as demand rises, so do the housing unit prices.

That's how the market works.

But as this trend continues, many of Miami's long-time residents will be forced out of the city as more affluent tenants move in.

The soaring housing prices are also affecting first-time house buyers because properties are becoming almost impossible to pay off with a middle-class salary.

For the working-class families that make up the spine of this city, that means it will be harder than ever to cement roots in Miami.

Even worse, this situation makes me and many of the people from my generation ponder if we'll ever be able to afford a home.

With this crisis having no end in sight, one can't help but wonder if



NINA CUESTA / THE REPORTER

the rent prices in Miami will ever stabilize and meet the demand of our city's growing immigrant population.

While controlling immigration seems like an alternative, this is not the root of the problem. Miami, a sprawling city of single-family units, is in dire need of denser and more affordable housing units.

In February, the City of Miami unveiled a new housing project, which features two high-rise

buildings along with commercial space adjacent to a Metrorail stop.

While the initiative will not fix Miami's housing crisis by itself, the new project will hopefully mark a period of transition in which Miami embraces housing density to meet its demand.

If not, creating a new life and home in a different city or county will be the only answer to affordable housing for Miami's working class.

MENTAL HEALTH

MDC Offers Free Resources To Help You De-Stress

☐ Although life can become increasingly stressful due to a demanding academic workload, financial struggles and personal issues, the College offers free mental health resources to help students.



By **Angel Araujo**
angel.araujo002@mymdc.net

Overdue assignments, economic hardships and time management issues.

Those are all problems college students face, and while those things can make you feel overwhelmed, you are not alone.

According to a recent study by the American Addiction Center, nearly 88 percent of college students report suffering from stress, which can come from a variety of aspects including our social and personal lives.

Imagine if your stress was a 50-pound bag.

After getting used to lugging it around in your day-to-day life, the bag may start to feel natural. However, the smallest problem or situation can make the bag heavier, causing you to lose your balance.



AIMEE SALVADOR / THE REPORTER

When we lose our balance, we start to feel like everything is impossible to solve. Once we fall into the trap of hopelessness, we begin to lose sleep, suffer higher irritability and increased negative thoughts.

Throughout my college years, I've had to work up to 60 hours a week to afford my education. At some point, the work became draining and I was left with only a few hours to focus on school.

When my sleeping and eating habits began to suffer because of it, I began to experience daily mental breakdowns.

It wasn't until I reached that breaking point that I realized I

needed to reach out for help and take care of my mental health. Ever since then it feels like I've removed a huge weight off my shoulders.

As Miami Dade College students we are offered a plethora of resources to liberate us from stress.

Through Single Stop—a college-wide program that aims to help students better navigate college life—you are entitled to 10 hours of free therapy with a licensed psychologist. Sessions can take place virtually or physically from Monday to Saturday depending on your schedule.

For immediate emotional

support and other mental health-related services, you can also call the 24-hour MDC student crisis and support line at 1-888-983-0033 or the 211 Helpline.

Asking for help allowed me to overcome my stress issues.

Stress is a serious topic that shouldn't be underestimated. If not taken care of, it can ruin your life by contributing to health-related issues like depression, substance abuse and high blood pressure.

Don't be afraid to seek help by talking to a counselor or friend and attending workshops to improve your mental health. It's never too late to take care of yourself.



The Reporter

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Bureaus

North Campus Bureau
✉ 11380 N.W. 27th Ave. Room 4209
Miami, FL 33167
☎ (305) 237-1254

Kendall Campus Bureau
✉ 11011 S.W. 104th St. Room M239
Miami, FL 33176
☎ (305) 237-2715

Wolfson Campus Bureau
✉ 300 N.E. Second Ave. Suite 1610
Miami, FL 33132
☎ (305) 237-3368

Editorial Board

Juan S. Gomez
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Manolo Barco, Media Adviser
✉ mbarco@mdc.edu
☎ NORTH.....(305) 237-1255
☎ KENDALL.....(305) 237-2323
☎ WOLFSON.....(305) 237-3477

Ammy Sanchez, Newsroom Clerk
✉ asanch29@mdc.edu
☎ NORTH.....(305) 237-1254

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