

# The Multicultural News

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A laboratory project of the University of Arkansas  
Walter J. Lemke Department of Journalism

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## ESL Growth Reflects Demographic Changes

Sam Doss

*The Multicultural News*

The 5.3 million English as a Second Language students represent 10.8 percent of the school system in the United States.

In Arkansas, the number of English-language learners is growing quickly.

Between 1997 and 2011, the number of English learners reported in the state grew from approximately 7,000 to over 31,000. Northwest Arkansas has been the primary location for language minority students, with 63 percent, according to the 2011 Arkansas Department of Education Home Language Survey Report.

“The reason this is happening is because the relatively strong economy and low cost of living in Arkansas continue to attract immigrants and facilitate their integration into the state,” said Tina Howlett, ESL/migrant specialist for the Rogers School District. “Immigrants are integrating into Arkansas communities and the economy, just as previous generations of immigrants have done.”

As a result of the influx of these students, ESL learning across the state has had to adapt to address the changing demographics of the area. One of those adaptations is increasing the access to teacher-training programs.

Arkansas utilizes two federal grant

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Staff Photo

Local businesses advertise their ability to communicate with the growing Latino population.



Staff Photo

Diana Gonzales Worthen addresses LJP students about the importance of language.

## Language Skills Help at Work

Molly Little

*The Multicultural News*

With the growth of non-English speakers in Northwest Arkansas and the U.S., many people are learning different languages as part of their jobs.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the largest retailer in the world, is a huge influence on the area and has many bilingual associates. Mark Phillips, a Wal-Mart vice-president for pharmacy merchandising, said although he knows very little Spanish, knowing multiple languages has helped him tremendously with international business and travel.

While Phillips said he cannot carry on a conversation in Spanish, he said Spanish-speakers generally “appreciate the effort” of his attempt to speak their native language. The 24-year Wal-Mart veteran said he has seen a significant increase in Hispanic speakers in the area in the past two decades.

Alex Hurd, a Wal-Mart

senior director in Health & Wellness, has had a slightly different experience, he said, because of his broad knowledge of different languages and cultures.

“As I was growing up in Germany, my mother spoke to me in Italian, my father spoke to me in English and I learned German from playing with other children and going to school,” Hurd said.

Hurd can speak in five languages: English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. Hurd said having so many languages under his belt has granted him many academic and professional opportunities, along with flexibility and personal enlightenment.

He said being exposed to so many different languages early on created his appreciation for different cultures and a desire to delve into more languages.

Carolina Vargas, an Hispanic outreach project coordinator at the University of Arkansas for Medical

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# The Multicultural News Staff

2015  
The Multicultural News  
Student Participants

**Bentonville High School**  
Molly Little

**Fayetteville High School**  
Summer Bush  
Sam Doss  
Eve Jagers  
Nataly Soto  
Veronica Torres

**Haas Hall Academy**  
Gabriel Edwards

**Rogers Heritage High School**  
Ilen Marquez

**Rogers High School**  
Jose Aldape  
Hisleny Garcia Campos

Cade Farmer  
Bryan Grigsby  
Rachel Luz Rosado  
Jessamy Samuels  
Jovanny Soto

**Springdale High School**  
Channing Baldwin  
Gesselle Magaña  
Manny Mejia

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Geniece Yates, Fayetteville High School  
Kimberly Burgess, Zachary T. Jostad and  
Marsha Tyer, Bentonville High School  
Ben Pollock, Lemke Journalism  
Department

## Speakers

Jacob Pinter, NPR, Washington, D.C.  
Samantha Baker, freelance photographer  
Sgt. Donald Dormer, U.S. Army  
Fayetteville Recruiting Center  
Diana Gonzales Worthen, Project RISE  
Antoinette Grajeda, KUAF  
Jonathan Martinez, KNWA  
Geovanny Sarmiento, Rogers-Lowell  
Area Chamber of Commerce  
Scott Markley, Wal-Mart Stores Inc.  
corporate affairs

Jacob Perry and Jennifer Aguirre, Cisneros Center for New Americans  
Carolina Vargas, UAMS Northwest  
Bret Schulte, Lemke Journalism  
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## Director's Note

# Reflections from the (brand new) Director



Gina Shelton, new LJP director

You can't say LJP without thinking of Katherine Shurlds. She has kept this program running year after year, with a caring tenacity. It's an honor, as the new director, to try to continue that tradition.

My mother was an ESL and adult educator, but my experience has been in hard news as a reporter for 17 years with The Associated Press. Not long after joining the University of Arkansas faculty, I discovered the passion in our department for this program and its students.

Initially I was skeptical that students would show up every Saturday morning. So goal No. 1 was recruitment. I started the year by visiting many of the high schools that send students to LJP. Wonderful counselors and teachers helped identify about 20 talented students for the 2015 class.

The students not only showed up, they wowed us with their intelligence, communication skills, creativity and humor. Although the students came from six different high schools, they worked together as a team.

Over the six weeks, they listened, asked questions, wrote stories, took pictures, and worked in a television studio. They learned and bonded.

A thank you is owed to the students and their parents for their commitment to the 2015 program, along with the volunteers who made it happen. Managing editor Jeff Smith, news guru Gerald Jordan, broadcast veteran Ricky Thein, student assistant Mille Hogue, and Katherine Shurlds are five of the many, many people who made this year another success.

This project would not be possible without the generosity of Tyson Foods. In February, the company again showed its support for diversity at the University of Arkansas with a \$120,000 grant to the Office of Diversity Affairs to help retain and ultimately graduate underrepresented juniors and seniors.

The university is becoming more diverse, thanks to Tyson and to LJP.



Shelton works with an LJP student.

# Lemke Journalism Project Finishes 14th Year



**Staff Photo**

Students from Northwest Arkansas committed their Saturday morning time off to come to the UofA to learn about journalism.

**Veronica Torres**  
*The Multicultural News*

The Lemke Journalism Project continued in its 14th year of presenting the regional high school workshop. The project extended over five winter Saturdays, rather than the scheduled six because a February snow storm closed the University of Arkansas.

The Lemke Journalism Project, also known as LJP, is open to Northwest Arkansas high school students who are interested in learning about journalism and covering diverse cultures. Students interview influential leaders from across the region, and they

work with UA professors and local media professionals to produce stories and see their bylines in print.

Katherine Shurlds directed the program since its inception in 2002 until last year, and Gina Shelton, who teaches journalism at the UofA, is the new program director.

"I've brought new ideas, but kept in place the old ideas that were really working," Shelton said.

Students agree that things have changed over the years.

"This year, I feel like it has changed up a lot, especially because we're still in that little room but it just feels different, I feel like this year we actually connected everyone in the

student group," said Summer Bush, a third-year participant from Fayetteville High School.

In the beginning the Lemke Journalism Project had a main mission, but it has somewhat changed.

"Originally we were hoping to add to the diversity of newsrooms," Shurlds said. "We saw the increase in Hispanic population in the area, and we thought if we could get some Hispanic kids, Marshall-lese kids in here, in four years they'll be ready to go to newsrooms.

"But it didn't really work out that everybody was interested in journalism," she said.

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## Shurlds Leaves a Legacy with the LJP

**Gesselle Magana**  
*The Multicultural News*

Katherine Shurlds remembers the time that a former Lemke Journalism Project student brought her tamales. The student, Maribel Albarran, had been in the program for high school students the first year, in 2002, and returned for two more years. Then, Shurlds lost track of her.

One year, Albarran, who attended Crowder College, returned to the University of Arkansas campus to visit shortly before Christmas break. She arrived at Kimpel Hall in the journalism department with homemade tamales for Shurlds. And, Shurlds said, they were delicious.

"It's just the fact that she would think to bring me something from her culture," Shurlds said.

The gesture just reinforced to Shurlds that the program she helped start has a family aspect to it.

The Lemke Journalism Project just completed its 14th year at the UA Walter J. Lemke Department of Journalism. Shurlds was the director the first 13 years.

The workshop allows students to go out into their communities to look for stories to write for a newspaper, called The Multicultural News.

Working with journalism faculty members and professionals who volunteer their time, the students brainstorm story ideas, identify sources, conduct interviews and write stories. Often times, students return for all three years. During that time, those family-like ties develop.

Shurlds has been the backbone of the project the whole time. She began working with



**Staff Photo**

Gerald Jordan and Katherine Shurlds were honored for their work with the Lemke Journalism Project in a program presented by the Latino Alumni Society of the Arkansas Alumni Association. Jeff Smith was also honored, but could not attend.

Al Lopez, locally known as "Papa Rap," to get Hispanic high school students involved in the program. They were interested in seeing more diversi-

ty among students in the journalism department and among professionals in the media.

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## Second Language Helps

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Sciences, said she mainly communicates with people who only speak Spanish every day. Spanish is Vargas's first language.

Sometimes the hardest part of being bilingual and one of the hardest parts of her job is not knowing how to communicate the situation in the language she needs to use, she said. Communicating in Spanish is something Vargas never stops doing, she said. Vargas has benefited from knowing both English and Spanish, especially in situations where there's no other way to communicate, she said.

*Molly Little is a Bentonville High School junior. This is her first year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

# Military Provides Students Options

Jose Aldape

*The Multicultural News*

The military was more than just a way out of Arkansas for one Fayetteville High School student.

Chioma Okorosor, a 17-year-old Fayetteville High School student, said the military provides a way to shape her life.

"I think the Marines gives structure, discipline and values," she said. "I know a lot of kids through the recruiting office who, without the military, would be doing something else, probably not on the right side of the law, so it helps with troubled teens or for people who are patriotic."

Okorosor said the appeal of the military for her was the opportunity to do something of value now while preserving a way to attend college in the future – without the need to submit to insurmountable debt.

"This way I already have my career. I'm already doing what I wanted to do and

then college will only help to further what I want to do," she said.

The post-9/11 GI Bill allows for military service members who have served at least 90 days of active duty after Sept. 10, 2001, to receive financial assistance to attend college, trade school, on-the-job-training and other educational programs after they have been discharged from service.

Army Sgt. Donald Dormer echoes the collegiate and non-collegiate benefits the military provides.

"The Army gives you support," he said. "It gives you a sense of belonging."

Dormer said the Army does not care about "the color of your skin, your religion, where you grew up, what you look like." He said the Army gives people support and a sense of belonging.

"Nobody's black. Nobody's white. Everybody's green," he said.

After his career in the Army, Dormer said he would continue to reap the benefits the military has provided him by pursuing a



**Hisleny Garcia Campos** The Multicultural News LJP Student Jeremy Soto, right, interviews Army Sgt. Donald Dormer about military recruitment.

career in teaching. Dormer is now working toward a college degree and plans to get a master's degree.

Okorosor will head to boot camp with the United States Marines in Parris Island, S.C., this spring. She will be starting her career and shaping her adult life at 18-years-old, but she knows that college will still be an option.

"I will still have the chance to go to college but this way I will be set up first, I will be on a base and they pay for everything,

and so, if I went to college now, I wouldn't have the means to pay for school. I would be in thousands of dollars of debt," she said.

Students interested in pursuing a career in the military are encouraged to speak to members of the military at the recruiting office in the Northwest Arkansas Mall in Fayetteville.

*Jose Aldape is a Rogers High School senior. This is his first year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

# DACA Provides Temporary Legal Residency Status

Hisleny Garcia Campos  
*The Multicultural News*

Abigail Martinez is a young lady born in San Salvador, El Salvador.

When she was 9 her family decided to move to the United States. That was April 2004.

"As a 9-year-old I had no idea what was going on, or the magnitude of the decision my mother had made," Martinez said.

Martinez, her mother and her 20-year-old cousin traveled

through Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and part of the United States. Before they could cross the border, though, she had to face the most difficult decision of her young life: being separated from her mom.

"It was just me and a 3-year-old girl with a number of strangers from one house to the other," she said.

One barrier Martinez had to face upon coming into the United States was language.

"I remember constantly going home, crying to my mother ask-

ing her to take me back home," she said.

Teachers from John Tyson Elementary helped Martinez adjust to the new culture and helped her better understand the language. When she reached junior high, the idea of college never really crossed her mind. "My parents talked about me graduating high school, and I thought it was the biggest accomplishment a student could have," she said.

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**Staff Photo**

Zessna Garcia, a UA journalism student and LJP coach, shows the identification cards that have marked her passage from Mexico to the U.S. and into the DACA program.

# Leaders Urge More Diversity in Participation



Daniel McFarland, Associated Student Government president at UA.

Manny Mejia  
*The Multicultural News*

Local Latino leaders encourage students of diverse backgrounds to pursue leadership positions. And, although representation in local government is not diverse, the Latino community is still fairly young in terms of population growth.

Al “Papa Rap” Lopez, school community liaison with the Springdale School District, said he reinforces this thought.

“Communities like Chicago, New York and San Antonio have generations of Latinos that have been there for hundreds of years,” he said. “When you have a community that is fairly new, it’s going to take a while.”

In 2013, Arkansas census figures estimated that 6.9 percent of the state’s population was Hispanic or Latino. In Washington County, the estimate was 16.1 percent of the population as Hispanic or Latino.

An estimated 15.6 percent of

Arkansas’ population in 2013 was African American, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In Benton County, 1.9 percent of the population was estimated as African American. In Washington County, 3.4 percent of the population was estimated under that ethnicity.

The University of Arkansas, however, does have diverse representation within student government. The University of Arkansas Associated Student Government is an organization that represents the interests of the student population in all facets of campus life, said Daniel McFarland, student body president.

McFarland said he is majoring in health administration, and his goal is inclusion for every individual at the school. He praised the college’s diversity inclusion programs.

“The university has a current initiative to increase our diversity numbers to about 20 percent by 2020, and they are getting closer and closer to that,” he said. “I just want to make sure that every stu-

dent here feels like student government cares about them, because that is in our mission statement and our purpose in why we are here.”

McFarland said he stresses the importance of reaching out to and being involved in different organizations. He said this is important, because it helps people to eventually distinguish themselves as selfless leaders of integrity.

Lopez, similarly, had advice for students with diverse backgrounds.

“As Latinos they should take new steps toward their academic futures, the biggest advice I can give them is to start taking courses or classes at the university to enhance their Spanish,” Lopez said. “They will be very successful because of the way the community is moving and will have more and more possibilities.”

*Manny Mejia is a Springdale High School senior. This is his first year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

## Hispanic Community Needs More Doctors

Gabriel Edwards  
*The Multicultural News*

Everywhere in America, the Hispanic population is undeniably growing. However, there are some professions that aren’t showing the growth, like doctors.

The number of Hispanic doctors in the United States has decreased in the last 30 years, according to a report published earlier this year. In fact, a study done at UCLA in 1980 showed there were just 130 Latino doctors per 100,000 Latinos in America. By 2010, that figure had dropped to 105 per 100,000. On the opposite end of the spectrum, recent years have seen an increase in Hispanic pa-

tients at doctors’ offices.

Carolina Vargas is a researcher with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. The school is among those that recently received a grant of \$3 million from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for investigating discrepancies among various groups in America. As a member of the Hispanic community, Vargas is able to explain some of the reasons behind the discrepancies.

“They don’t dream about being in the medical profession. There is no pathway,” Vargas said about the decreasing number of Latino doctors.

Many people in the Hispanic com-

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## Shurlds Hands off LJP To Colleague Gina Shelton

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In the early stages of the project, faculty of the journalism department drove vans to transport the student journalists. Now Rogers school district provides transportation to and from the university campus in Fayetteville.

Many students come into the program thinking that it’s going to be challenging just because they’re in a college setting.

“Even though we’re college professors, we’re just folks. I think it benefits the high school students by seeing that it’s not so scary to come to college,” Shurlds said.

This year, Lemke Journalism Project is under new direction. New director

Gina Shelton is a fellow journalism faculty member. Shurlds remains involved in some ways, but she really likes Shelton’s energy and enthusiasm, and her commitment to continuing the project.

Shurlds said her personal life has become much richer with the legacy of this project.

As for Maribel Albarran, she later returned to the University of Arkansas to complete a journalism degree. She was one of about 280 students who’ve come through the LJP program so far.

*Gesselle Magaña is a Springdale High School junior. This is her first year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

# Cultural Food Stores Popping Up in NWA

Ilen Marquez and  
Rachel Luz Rosado  
*The Multicultural News*

As Northwest Arkansas has become a more diverse community, cultural markets in the region have expanded. These markets give residents an opportunity to experience different foods.

A'Chau Oriental Market opened four years ago in Rogers, offering fresh seafood, rice, vegetables and other popular products.

"There is a lot of stores in Springdale, so we wanted to add some in Rogers because of the community," store employee Denny Nguyen said. "There is a larger need, and we wanted to add more diversity."

Rebekah Townsley, a Rogers Heritage High School sophomore, is of Chinese descent. She and her family eat a mix of foods.

According to 2010 U.S. Census statistics, the Asian population in Northwest Arkansas is 2.4 percent, compared to 1.2 percent statewide. The Hispanic population of the region is about 15 percent, compared to less than 7 percent for the entire state.

Townsley said she enjoys trying different cultural foods. She has incorporated Mexican, Salvadorian, Vietnamese and Thai into her cooking.

Manuel Ortiz said his Hispanic grocery store, Guanajuato, has been open in Rogers for 10 years. The most common foods sold there are "meat products and in general everything." He was also in the grocery business in another state, before making Northwest Arkansas his home.

Heritage High School student Steven Molina, whose family is from El Salvador, said he shops at a Hispanic store called La Taranda.

"Me and my dad go there

sometimes for some meat products to make carne asada, and we also sometimes get avocados," Molina said. "Depending on the type of meat, I eat carne with tacos, burritos, soups and quesadillas."

The variety of options showcases the region's diversity.

Geovanny Sarmiento, vice president of minority business development with the Rogers-Lowell Chamber of Commerce, said, "Many people from different cultures come, and we want to show them what good things we have to offer."

Sarmiento helps women and racial minorities develop businesses in the region. He said small businesses hold together the entire economy.

The area's diversity is seen in the food in the region, as well as the languages that are spoken, said Sarmiento.

"Students who are bilingual have more advantages and op-



**Ilen Marquez The Multicultural News**  
Denny Nguyen, an employee at A'Chau Oriental Market, greets customers.

portunities to achieve," said Jessica Silva of Rogers. "They can possibly apply for better jobs and are really helpful when needed to translate messages."

Community leaders are trying to engage new residents to showcase the diversity, Sarmiento said. More information on the

region's diversity is available at <http://www.diversitynwa.org>.

*Ilen Marquez is a Rogers Heritage High School sophomore, and Rachel Luz Rosado is a Rogers Heritage High School sophomore. This is the first year for both in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

## Shortage of Physicians Hurts Hispanic Community

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munity do not have the financial capabilities to attend medical school, she said.

"The lack of support, the lack of financial stability, these are both factors," Vargas said.

Another factor is that Hispanic families tend not to prepare their children to go into specific professions.

"The idea in the Hispanic community is that you don't prepare them until senior year of high school," Vargas said.

In contrast, it is a mostly an American idea to start preparing your children for careers from a young age, she said.

Vargas, as a project coordinator at the Office of Community Health and Research at UAMS,

said many Hispanic students are unaware that there is financial support for medical school, or they don't believe that they have the ability to make it through. She has met with multiple individuals and helped them decide their career paths, with many settling on medicine.

However, Vargas seems to believe that one of the biggest reasons for the shortage is that Hispanic culture does not emphasize medical degrees as obtainable.

And, she said, there's another problem: the increasing number of Hispanic patients. Latinos in the United States tend not to go to the doctor as a preventative measure, and only go when they

absolutely need to.

"In the Hispanic community, we wait until the signs are very bad," she said.

Much of the time, people use their pastors as substitutes for doctors, seeking spiritual and herbal remedies. However, this is not the only cultural barrier that might prevent Hispanics from visiting the doctor.

Another reason Hispanics, mainly immigrants, might not go to the doctor is the language barrier, Vargas said.

"In the past, there often wasn't an interpreter; doctors had to piece things together," she said.

While some doctors' offices have interpreters now, or at

least someone who understands some Spanish, this is still a problem.

According to an NPR report, many states still have trouble providing interpreters. Several times, bad interpretations by doctors have even caused deaths.

One reason that Hispanics tend not to visit the doctor is that they feel unwelcome. Many Hispanics have said they feel discriminated against because of their race.

Vargas said it has gotten to a point where people may enter a doctor's office expecting to get deported. Sometimes people are even judged by their names.

As a Hispanic woman, Var-

gas said she has experienced this. "I've had some people ask me 'Is that really you name?'" she said.

Vargas' department is attempting to prevent health issues in the Hispanic community by encouraging better diets and preventative measures. The department is also raising awareness for the issue and recommending that doctors provide interpreters. Vargas is still encouraging young people in the Hispanic community to become doctors, one person at a time.

*Gabriel Edwards is a Haas Hall Academy sophomore. This is first year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

# Food Trucks Increasing Dining Diversity

Eve Jagers

*The Multicultural News*

Residents and visitors in Northwest Arkansas have more access to Uzbek cuisine because of a food truck that recently opened in Fayetteville.

Kebab Grilled Bread Food Truck is on College Avenue in Fayetteville, according to the business' website. Hayot Tuychiev, who moved to the region with his wife from Uzbekistan in 2006, owns the truck. By 2014, they had raised enough money to open the business and start serving kebabs.

Matt Geller created the National Food Truck Association to help food trucks, he said. He is the chief executive of the association. Geller primarily dealt with legal problems ven-

dors had to confront, he said, like parking and time limits in certain areas of Los Angeles.

"We are an association of associations," he said.

Geller first got involved when a friend spoke to him about legal issues with his own truck. He changed legislation and helped remove restricting laws. He acts as a consultant between regulators. This set the ball rolling to create similar associations in places like New York, Maryland and Pennsylvania.

"Depending on what other food trucks need, others may be able to provide it for them," he said.

These mobile restaurants have been gaining popularity and legislation over the past

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Courtesy Photo

Hayot Tuychiev is the owner of the KGB Food Truck in Fayetteville.

## Journalism Project at 14 Years, Going Strong

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Students do, however, leave the workshop with a better understanding of how and why news decisions are made.

Students this year contributed to publishing a newspaper. As in years past, they also were able to choose whether they wanted to learn more about broadcasting or photography and split into groups.

Students interviewed and worked with Antoinette Grajeda, a news producer at KUAF-FM, a National Public Radio affiliate. They also heard from recent graduate Jacob Pinter, who is working for NPR in Washington, D.C., and Samantha Baker, a UA law student and former news pho-

tographer.

The workshop included a tour of the KNWA-TV news studio and a visit with news anchor Jonathan Martinez.

College of Education professor Diana Gonzales Worthen visited LJP and talked about her learning project, Realizing and Increasing Student Excellence.

Students also heard from corporate executives. Geovanny Sarmiento, vice president of minority business development for the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, and Scott Markley, senior manager for national media relations for Wal-Mart Stores Inc., spoke to the students.

Jacob Perry and Jennifer Aguirre made a presentation on behalf of the Cisneros Center for New Americans.

LJP students finished the program of scheduled visits by interviewing Sgt. Donald Dormer of the U.S. Army Fayetteville Recruiting Center, and Carolina Vargas, project coordinator for the Office of Community Health and Research at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

The interactions with newsmakers helped students grow in their interviewing skills, many said.

"It is such a big growth," Bush said. "I feel like going to Lemke has definitely helped.

They make it fun, and it wasn't stressful."

Students this year had good things to say about the program.

"(My favorite part of the project) was just interviewing other people from the community and seeing the things they do," said Hisleny Garcia Campos, a first-year participant from Rogers High School.

"My favorite part about the Lemke Journalism Project was whenever we had visitors from different organizations in the community," said Manny Mejia, a first-year participant from Springdale High School. "It was very nice to see them

give out so much information about the different changes that are occurring in the present time."

The project allows students to brainstorm with their assigned journalism coach to come up with story ideas that they choose.

Journalism writing was a new experience at Lemke for some. Some students who attend have little or no background in news writing, which is why LJP provides coaches for each student.

*Veronica Torres is a Fayetteville High School senior. This is her second year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

# State Law Prohibits Anti-Discrimination Ordinances

Jessamy Samuels

*The Multicultural News*

Senate Bill 202, also known as the Intrastate Commerce Improvement Act, passed the Arkansas Legislature Feb. 13. By his not signing the act, Gov. Asa Hutchinson allowed it to become law Feb. 23. The law prevents cities and counties from passing anti-discrimination ordinances.

“For me, personally, it means that I can be refused a lease for a house or an apartment and I can also be fired because of my sexual orientation,” said Lucas Coberly, a University of Arkansas freshman. “It sends the message to LGBT people in Arkansas that they are not welcome. I feel that most people on this campus do not agree with the actions that are happening in the legislature.”

That was the case, too, in Fayetteville, where City Council adopted an anti-discrimination ordinance that later was defeated by voters.

“I don’t support the bill be-

cause it takes away cities’ home rule and sends a bad message about the state of Arkansas. It negatively impacts a city’s ability to effectively govern itself,” Fayetteville Mayor Lioneld Jordan said of the state law in an e-mail response to questions.

Opponents of the state law see it as a direct response to the anti-discrimination ordinance that was repealed in Fayetteville in December.

Civil Rights Ordinance 119 was passed at a meeting of the Fayetteville City Council in August 2014. It would have prohibited local businesses and other entities from discriminating against employees and customers based on gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity and other factors. Fayetteville voters repealed the ordinance in a Dec. 9 special election. The repeal passed with 52 percent of voters.

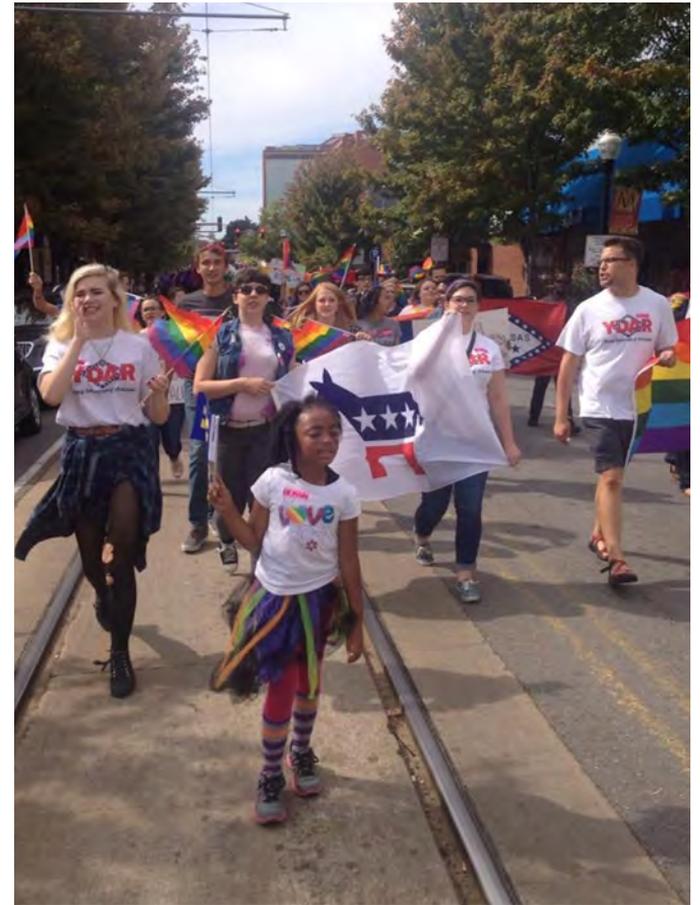
“I have spent my life standing on the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. I believe the Civil Rights Ordinance supported those principles. How-

ever, the majority of people who voted felt differently, and I always respect the vote of the people, whether I agree with it or not,” Jordan said. “The bottom line is that the system worked. The Council passed the ordinance, the people had a right to challenge that with a referendum vote and they prevailed in a city-wide election. That is the way the system is supposed to work.”

The group that was against the ordinance, Repeal 119, said “(the) ordinance attacks rights guaranteed to us by the Constitution of the United States” and that it “creates an environment where sexual predators can use the cover of an anti-discrimination law to enter previously gender-private areas causing a major public safety risk.”

Springdale Mayor Doug Sprouse expressed “real concerns about the ordinance in Fayetteville, but regardless of how one feels about it, they went through the process, and the people of

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**Staff Photo**

Supporters of LGBT rights parade for equal rights.

## *DACA Allows Immigrants to DREAM*

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It wasn’t until eighth grade that she heard about college, Martinez said, and the requirements necessary to attend. She began to get involved in several activities, including the marching band and volleyball team. While in high school, she was in the color guard as part of the Springdale High School marching band.

Once Martinez’s senior year started, reality hit her.

“Ever since I came to the United States I knew I was undocumented, which kept me from getting my driver’s license and be able to start working at

the age of 16 like my friends did,” she said.

Martinez said she was devastated once it was time to apply to college. One of the struggles of being undocumented was that she had to pay out-of-state tuition.

By the end of her senior year, she received something amazing. “I received the best graduation present any high school senior could receive.”

Martinez was given a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals designation. “That gave my life a 180-degree positive turn.”

The DACA status allowed

her to obtain a Social Security number and legally work in the United States. She took a year off from school after high school so she could save up money for college. After a year, she enrolled at NorthWest Arkansas Community College and received a scholarship.

“It made a huge difference,” she said.

She is now a member of the student ambassador and activities board and also is the president of the DREAMers of NWACC.

“DACA has helped me live without fear,” she said.

Supporters say that DACA has changed the lives of many students and people who have been in the U.S. for an extended period without documentation. DACA is one of two executive orders addressing immigration and not a lot of people know or understand what DACA does for the undocumented community.

DACA started June 15, 2012, and President Obama extended the program in November for another two years. By June 2013, more than half a million people applied for DACA nationwide. Data shows that 3,177 applied from Arkansas; 2,084 were ap-

proved.

Of those applying in Arkansas, 84 percent were born in Mexico. DACA applicants in Arkansas range in age from 20 or younger.

DACA is only a temporary measure and is not intended to, and does not grant, legal status. Although it does not provide permanent residency or citizenship, it does provide legal temporary permission to live in the U.S.

*Hisleny Garcia Campos is a Rogers High School senior. This is her first year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

## 2015 LJP Participants



# Student After-School Programs Could be Cut

Sam Doss

*The Multicultural News*

Student after-school programs could potentially be cut as a result of a bill being proposed to the U.S. House of Representatives this spring.

A measure known as the Student Success Act (H.R. 5) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives in early February would consolidate more than 65 separately funded afterschool education programs into a Local Academic Flexible Grant. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act is intended

to replace No Child Left Behind.

Afterschool programs are broadly defined by the After-school Alliance as any program that provides child care for youth when students are not at school and students are not at home, including anything from after-school clubs to summer camps.

Arkansas has more than 11,000 children in the U.S. Department of Education's federal afterschool program, also known as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative.

The proposed measure would eliminate the initiative by changing the current separate funding stream into a grant block.

Supporters of the measure

said the block funding will provide more flexibility and will eliminate the "maze" of programs that currently exist. Under the block system, state education agencies can use the funds for multiple purposes of their choosing, which supporters of the bill said will help "restore local control" and "reduce the federal footprint" according to a fact sheet from the House Education and the Workforce Committee.

"The Student Success Act provides states and school districts more flexibility to fund local priorities, not Washington's priorities," said John Kline (R-MN), chairman of the House Education and the Workforce

Committee, in a statement on the floor of the House. "The legislation eliminates dozens of ineffective or duplicative programs so that each dollar makes a direct, meaningful, and lasting impact in classrooms."

Opponents said the measure could potentially cause termination of afterschool funding because of competition with other programs. This extends to programs in Arkansas.

"The critical issue for Arkansas is that no one can guarantee that the existing 135 programs serving 13,000 students will be preserved under the proposed changes," said Laveta Wills-Hale, network coordinator of the Ar-

kansas Out of School Network. "Now, more than ever it is important to help kids attain the 21st century skills required to compete and succeed in a rapidly changing society."

University of Arkansas education professor Diana Gonzales Worthen said the legislation could be devastating to children involved in 21st CCLC initiative.

"The funding would be redirected, children will not have enrichment activities, more students will be unsupervised, working parents will struggle to fill the gap between 3 to 6 p.m. and children will not have access

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# Cisneros Center Helps Improve Immigrants' Lives

Jessamy Samuels

*The Multicultural News*

The non-profit Cisneros Center for New Americans works to ease immigrant integration and meet the needs of those who have come to the United States in search of opportunity and the promise of a place where they can thrive, staff members told Lemke Journalism Project students. A branch of the Center opened in 2014 at the Jones Center for Families in Springdale.

"We work on immigrant integration rather than assimilation," said Jennifer Aguirre, a Cisneros Center fellow in Northwest Arkansas.

Cisneros Center staff make sure resources are available for immigrant families by working together with service providers to ensure families have all the resources they need.

"We look to create infrastructure of services so that we can provide the companies who are providing existing services with what they need to meet the needs of an immigrant community that is still developing," Aguirre

said.

"This is something that really impacts peoples' lives," said Jacob Perry, also a Cisneros Center fellow.

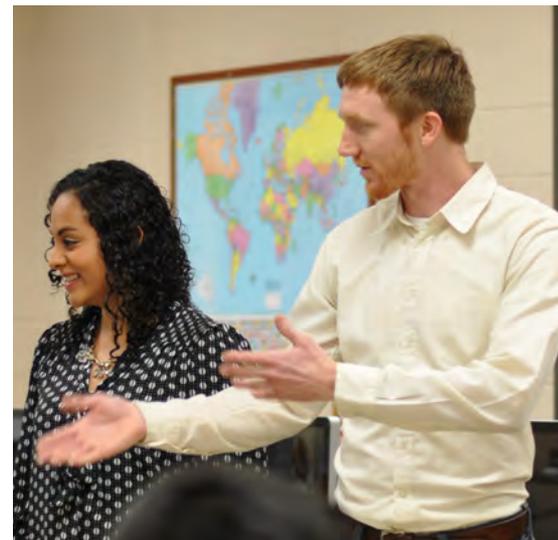
The mission of the center is carried out through the American Dream Initiative, which focuses on three main strategies. They are:

- To identify and implement immigrant integration best practices
- To instill a sense of urgency about education
- To identify and develop young leaders

An infrastructure for newly naturalized Americans to help them in their quest to achieve the goals of the American Dream Initiative has been created. It is called the Roadmap to the American Dream. There are 10 steps that will empower immigrants in their path to do what is needed to find their way to the "American Dream" and the opportunities that are available to them.

The first task that is stressed in the Roadmap is the importance of learning the English language and American culture. The last task encourages immigrants always

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**Nataly Soto** The Multicultural News  
Jacob Perry and Jennifer Aguirre, fellows at the Cisneros Center in Northwest Arkansas, talk to LJP students about immigrant integration.

# UAMS Grant Aims to Reduce Health Disparities

Summer Bush

*The Multicultural News*

The University of Arkansas for Medical Services received a three-year, \$2.99 million grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention last September to address the health disparities in the Marshallese and Hispanic communities in Benton and Washington counties, the school announced in the fall.

The grant will help these communities in Benton and Washington counties by providing resources for more nutritious food options, while also providing resources regarding health care, UAMS officials said in the announcement.

Health disparities are differences in which the burden of diseases, injuries or other malfunctions may affect a people group in achieving optimal health. Health disparities can be caused by several factors, including poverty, access to health care and environmental threats, according to the CDC.

"Those in the non-Hispanic community are more likely to seek treatment that begins at prevention," Carolina Vargas, project coordinator at the UAMS office of community health and research, said to Lemke Journalism Project students. "When there is an illness, people seek treatment, and continue following that treatment. That's not common in Hispanic culture. The disparity includes all of those areas. When we put them side-by-side to someone who is Hispanic and someone who is non-Hispanic, the disparity is much bigger in Arkansas."

Vargas explained the implementation of nutritious foods at food pantries.

"A lot of the impoverished people are given a sack of food, and it can have ramen noodles and Little Debbie's treats," she said. "While the idea is to get these people fed, how much better would an apple and some perishable items in that bag do?"

Feed Communities has begun im-

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**Staff Photo**  
Carolina Vargas, project coordinator, UAMS office of community health and research.

# Bentonville High Starts Model UN Club

Molly Little

*The Multicultural News*

Bentonville High School students recently created a Model United Nations Club that involves student government, debate and forensics.

The club also is for those who are interested in learning about different cultures and countries as well as those who like learning about global perspectives.

Model United Nations is exactly what it sounds like. High schools choose a country to represent at a regional conference. The Model United Nations students, or ambassadors, also serve on different committees, where they draft bills and debate specific topics.

The Special Political Committee focuses on decolonization, human rights and peacekeeping, while the Economic and Finance Committee emphasizes promoting interests and solving problems about global finances and economics.

At each conference, the main topics dis-

cussed by the committees vary based on current world issues. The goal, regardless of the committee, is to draft and pass bills.

Bentonville High students recently competed in a regional Model United Nations conference at the University of Central Arkansas.

Nicholas Van Slooten, a BHS junior, represented Luxembourg in the Economics and Finance Committee. He said he wanted to attend the conference to “build his abilities as a speaker and diplomat and meet new people.”

BHS students also represented Japan and Sweden.

BHS teachers Zachary Jostad and Corey Thomas serve as the club’s sponsors and attended their first Model United Nations conference.

Thomas, a World History teacher, said the conferences help students “gain an appreciation for world affairs and politics, as well as an ability to make their voices heard.”

Jostad, an English teacher, said he enjoyed the conference as well. Model United Nations provides a “real-world setting to practice valuable academic and social skills”



that are important in high school and beyond, Jostad said.

Model United Nations provides plenty of opportunities for high school students to gain insight to different countries and cultures, gain confidence and public speaking skills and learn from their peers, both sponsors said.

*Molly Little is a Bentonville High School junior and a member of the Model United Nations Club. This is her first year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

# Food Trucks Roll Meals Into Town

*continued from page 7*

five years thanks to the association, Geller said.

“Taco trucks, like the ones in California, have been around for a long time,” he said. “But gourmet food trucks, like the ones in Los Angeles, started popping up around 2008.”

Food trucks have been successful, because they give customers new and innovative food, Geller said. They also provide a unique social experience.

Entrepreneurs had to find investors willing to backup their ideas before food trucks became a popular option, Geller said. This often led to problems, like disagreements about technicalities, when opening a restaurant.

A separation between creators and funders means one or the other can back out at anytime, Geller said. A whole plan could be lost.

The rise of food trucks caused the process to be more do-it-yourself, Geller said. Entrepreneurs can buy a truck and start selling their culinary creations for as little as \$15,000 instead of putting down \$500,000 to \$1 million to start a restaurant. Damage can be kept to a minimum if an idea doesn’t work.

Food trucks allow entrepreneurs to put their “toe in the water just to check,” Geller said.

*Eve Jagers is a Fayetteville High School senior. This is her first year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

# Schools Taking Concussions Seriously

Bryan Grigsby

*The Multicultural News*

Rogers High School quarterback Cole Evans remembered his first concussion during a game against Har-Ber High School.

Evans had kept the ball and ran down the sideline when a Har-Ber linebacker hit him hard, knocking him out of bounds. Evans lay down for a minute as trainers and coaches came to see if he was all right. They helped him helped off the field.

A trainer asked him questions and had him do a standard sideline test of following the trainer’s fingers with his eyes and the trainer flashed a light into Evans’ eyes. The trainer then decided Evans needed to sit

the remainder of the game.

“My head was killing me and my vision was kind of blurred, plus I felt a little light headed,” Evans said.

In the world of sports, injuries are inevitable. Evans’ injury is common, especially among football players. However, athletes appear to suffer concussions more often than any other sports-related injury.

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that is usually the result of a blow to the head or body. Contrary to popular belief, concussions don’t always involve a person being knocked out or a loss of consciousness. A concussion occurs whenever a person’s mental state changes because of his or her brain being shaken.

In some cases, concus-

sions have been known to affect cognitive function if handled incorrectly and not treated properly.

In football, most athletes get at least one concussion during their career. The biggest question is how concussions affect these athletes in the long run. In the past three years, the number of concussions in the NFL have gone down every year. However, a bitter lawsuit between former NFL players and the league was settled last year only after the league agreed to pay millions to former players who suffered repeated head injuries. The league also agreed to do more research into the effects of brain injuries and do more to protect current and future players.

The serious injuries aren’t limited to professional athletes,

however.

Several Rogers High School players who were taken out during the 2014 football season due to concussions recalled how it felt when they got hit. However, it depends on how severe the concussion is and how long it takes the athlete to recover from all symptoms.

“After being hit, I wasn’t 100 percent sure of where I was at the moment,” senior linebacker Brett Hauser said.

Rogers High School trainer Jesse Herrington said it’s rare for a concussion to have any long-term effects.

However, repeated concussions can have consequences. The Center for Sports Concussion at Idaho State University

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# Potential Travelers Fear Dangers Awaiting in Mexico

Jovanny Soto

*The Multicultural News*

Thousands of people cross the United States-Mexico border every day, and some people said they live in fear of traveling to Mexico.

Even though most will be safe in the country's popular tourist destinations, but in some grittier parts of Mexico, however, the need for caution is higher.

Every year, there are thousands of murders, thefts and kidnappings, with most tied to ongoing skirmishes between drug cartels, according to published reports. More than 130 kidnappings of U.S. citizens were

reported to the U.S. Embassy in 2014, according to the U.S. State Department.

The Mexican government is threatened by various drug gangs such as Los Zetas, the Beltrán Leyva Cartel and the Colima Cartel, according to a recent CNN report.

The U.S. State Department has issued travel warnings for some parts of the country, with the latest update in December 2014. U.S. citizens should lower their personal profiles to avoid attention and are encouraged to maintain awareness of their surroundings, according to the state department.

Many Americans travel back

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Courtesy Photo

A stop at the Mexican border.

## *ESL Teachers Key to Success for Bilingual Students*

*continued from page 1*

teacher professional development training programs, Project EQUIP and Project RISE at the University of Arkansas.

"As our population becomes increasingly diverse in language and culture, it becomes critical for educators to enhance their instructional skills so that all culturally and linguistically diverse students achieve at high levels," said Diana Gonzales Worthen, manager of Project RISE.

To become ESL certified, teachers must complete four courses that provide a basis in ESL education.

"If teachers are trained in ESL, students are more likely to be successful because their teachers will know how to adapt instruction, authentically assess students, have a working knowledge of how a student acquires a second language and under-

stand how to teach people of other cultures," Worthen said. "These four areas encompass the four courses required for an ESL endorsement in Arkansas."

After completion of the four classes, teachers can gain an ESL Endorsement on their teaching license if they pass a test, the Praxis II in ESL.

Programs like Project RISE aim to improve course quality to create effective ESL teachers, as well as increase the quantity of ESL certified instructors, according to a UA grant proposal.

The growth in programs isn't the only way ESL is changing, however. The types of language learners are changing as well.

In Arkansas and the United States, there are increasing numbers of long-term English language learners. These students have been mostly or fully educated in the United States but are

still limited in English proficiency in upper grades. Continued limited literacy skills often result in poor academic achievement, Howlett said.

There also are many students who reside in bilingual homes and are born in the United States. These students are starting to play an important role in the Arkansas community.

"Some of these students, who have graduated from Arkansas high schools, are choosing to make Arkansas their permanent homes," Howlett said. "These students are pursuing their educational degrees and careers in Arkansas and becoming part of Arkansas communities. Some of our second generation English language learners have parents who are more familiar with the public school system."

Howlett said the growing implementation of ESL programs

is important to all Arkansans, even those who don't participate.

"For Arkansans who do not participate directly in ESL programs, it is important for our citizens to be aware of the rich cultural diversity that is the hallmark of our nation," Howlett said. "Because English is generally the language used by those working and dealing internationally, mastering English is important to anyone trying to keep pace with our shifting global society. Students who master English are able to have access to more employment opportunities that strengthen our economy."

Northwest Arkansas' economic boom of the last two decades, largely due to the presence of companies like Wal-Mart and Tyson, has challenged area schools and their capacity

to teach English language learner students. Schools and programs in the area have adapted to meet the needs of the influx of non-English speaking learners. And as the number of students grows, the quality and quantity of programs to serve those needs will grow right along with it.

"In the next 10 years, I anticipate that ESL programs in Arkansas will continue to grow and serve both our newly arrived immigrants as well as our second-generation families," Howlett said. "Immigrant families will not only be an important component in Arkansas' population and workforce growth, but will also be part of Arkansas history."

*Sam Doss is a Fayetteville High School senior. This is her second year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

# Film Festivals Growing in Popularity in State

Summer Bush

*The Multicultural News*



**Courtesy Photo**

Actress Geena Davis launched the Bentonville Film Festival to encourage female filmmakers.

With more film festivals come more opportunities.

Filmmakers both locally and nationally have access to genre-specific film festivals and have begun to take advantage of this opportunity.

Dale Carpenter, a University of Arkansas journalism professor and filmmaker for about 30 years, said the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival is one of the genre-specific festivals.

“The Hot Springs festival has limited their films to documentaries,” Carpenter said. “This festival was one of the first festivals that documentary filmmakers could show their films.”

Organizers describe the festival as the oldest nonfiction film fest in North America, although it attracts entries from all over the world. The fest also has gained recognition as an Oscars-qualifying event in the Documentary Short Subject category, according to the official website of the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival.

Similar festivals that feature documentaries include the Little Rock Film Festival, the Peace

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## Connection Helps Newcomers

*continued from page 10*

to remember where they came from and “carry (their) home country in (their) hearts,” although they must “commit to (their) obligations in the United States.”

The center has contacted more than 300 families to understand what they need. The center asks two questions. They ask what families like about living in Northwest Arkansas and they find out what families want to see happen in the community to improve the quality of life here.

The people at the Cisneros Center create partnerships by working with community members and with organizations that will be able to collaborate to provide more services. They started

by meeting with as many community leaders as possible, and worked on many projects here since their start in 2014.

The Cisneros Center is involved in Engage NWA, a network of leaders meant to create region-wide projects that help with integration.

An app, Money Think, meant to teach students to handle money, is being created by the Cisneros Center and people in both the Rogers and Springdale school districts. The Jones Center is also working on an app to help families by making it easier to see what activities and services are available to them. A GPS mapping website is being made in collaboration with Springdale High School to give

people access to different bus routes that are connected with services in the area.

The American Dream Initiative and the American Dream Roadmap are making the integration process easier for many families in Northwest Arkansas. The potential for success in these strategies is unignorable.

“Giving back to the community and getting involved are some of the best ways to integrate the community members,” Aguirre said. “Our goal is for people to stay here and feel welcomed here.”

*Jessamy Samuels is a Rogers High School senior. This is her first year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

## Programs Work

*continued from page 9*

to mentors and tutors,” Gonzales Worthen said.

The initiative is the only federal afterschool program, according to the Afterschool Alliance website.

Afterschool programs can be beneficial to the economy as well.

For every dollar spent on afterschool and summer programs, three dollars are returned to the economy, according to the Rose Institute’s Return on Investment Study.

The creation of a Local Academic Flexible Grant does not prohibit the development of afterschool programs, but afterschool advocates are concerned they will not have as much emphasis under the proposed act.

Opponents of the Student Success Act support the bipartisan Afterschool for America’s

Children Act, which maintains a separate and dedicated funding stream for 21st CCLC, according to Gonzales Worthen.

Wills-Hale said afterschool programs are here to stay, despite recent challenges.

“I see programs growing even stronger,” Wills-Hale said. “We know of programs that are successfully engaging the whole child – social, emotional, physical and cognitive development, and we are seeing the results in the data. Now, we have to do more to ensure that we are replicating successful program models so that every child that wants to participate can do so.”

*Sam Doss is a Fayetteville High School senior. This is her second year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

## State Says ‘No’

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Fayetteville ultimately decided.”

Organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign, the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Center for Lesbian Rights urged Hutchinson to veto the bill. Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the largest corporation in the world, also came out against the state law.

“In the short term, I don’t see any impact, positive or negative, for individuals or businesses,” Sprouse said.

SB 202 does not take effect until 90 days after the end of this legislative session. There has been conversation regarding the legal soundness of the bill, and a few cities in Arkansas have begun to discuss enacting anti-discrimination legislation before SB 202 becomes law.

The Conway City Council

voted to change the wording in its Equal Opportunity Employment section of the employee handbook to include “sexual orientation, gender identity and expression” in the list of factors that will be protected from discrimination. An emergency clause was passed to make the change happen immediately as to get the city law changed before SB 202 goes into effect.

“I know, as time goes by, people in Arkansas are going to become more friendly towards those who are not straight,” Coberly said. “Over time, the lawmakers will begin to reflect that change in attitude.”

*Jessamy Samuels is a Rogers High School senior. This is her first year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

## Hard Knocks

*continued from page 11*

advises that any player who has sustained three or more concussions stop playing contact sports to prevent any serious damage, but there isn't a policy enforcing that the player must sit out

If players tell a coach that they have a concussion, that's an automatic two weeks out, Rogers Head Coach Shawn Flannigan said. He has been enforcing that rule since he's been with the program for the past five years.

Schools now have procedures in place to indicate if someone has a concussion. All athletes take a test before the season begins and again after the season. If players might have a concussion during the season, then they'll take the test again. If there are any differences in the results, then coaches and doctors can decide if an athlete has sustained a concussion. Once athletes have had one concussion, they become more at risk to get another one once they've returned to their sport, according to The Center for Sports Concussion at Idaho State University.

There have been rare situations where athletes do have problems down the road like dementia or Post-Concussion Syndrome (PCS), which affects mental, emotional and physical behaviors.

While concussions are serious, the procedures and rules being put into place, plus advances in training and equipment, the number of head injuries is expected to decrease, according to Idaho State.

*Bryan Grigsby is a senior at Rogers High School. This is his first year in Lemke Journalism Project.*



Ricky Thein, UA sports journalism professor, right, works with Manny Meja and Molly Little in the UATV studio.

## Grant Will Help Decide Healthful Choices

*continued from page 10*

plementing healthier options in food pantries. The non-profit organization aims to help support and expand local food systems to facilitate food security, according to the organization website.

"Feed Communities is giving pantries a guide and an idea of how many food pantries are providing healthier options already," Vargas said. "They work in some of the more nutritious foods to the pantries that are not doing this."

The CDC-awarded grant will help the Hispanic and Marshallese communities

in regard to health care by providing clinical and community links, according to the UAMS announcement. The community will have increased access to chronic disease prevention and risk reduction.

Vargas is working work with Hispanic pastors to aid in health care, she said.

"Right now we're focusing on the Hispanic pastors that have a large population in their congregation of Hispanic people," she said. "Hopefully the pastors will be able to catch a health issue at hand in their congregation, maybe

through prayer requests. We will see how we can help and how we can link them with the resources that are needed to hopefully close that disparity a little more."

The grant also will provide funds for cultural competency trainings through health facilities in the area.

"I'm working with Hispanic competency training with doctors, nurses and office staff at clinics and hospitals," Vargas said. "We have three modules: Hispanic, Marshallese and general competency training."

Vargas said the coopera-

tion with the Hispanic and Marshallese individuals during appointments is vital.

"When you talk to them and schedule an appointment, you have to be thorough with answering questions and getting feedback," she said. "Because the organization is all about helping the Latino community be able to dissipate that large disparity of health care issue, you want them to tell you feedback."

*Summer Bush is a Fayetteville High School senior. This is her third year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

## Travelers Beware

*continued from page 12*

and forth annually to see family or visit tourist hotspots. However, the danger can be real, even for those familiar with the country,

Carolina Vargas, a researcher at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Fayetteville, said she hasn't returned to Durango, Mexico, in five years because of a scary incident that occurred on the way to her hometown.

Vargas and her husband were on their way to Durango for a Christmas holiday visit. They had been driving for many hours on a deserted highway when a car suddenly pulled behind them and began tailgating, trying to force them to pull over.

Vargas and her husband began to panic. Her husband sped up, losing the unknown car. The

episode left her shaken.

"They're no longer just pulling cars over but buses too," she said. "I can't go see my family."

Although gang attacks are severe, the Mexican government is implementing new measures to improve the safety of tourist and returning Mexicans, according to the BBC. Mexico has found help from their northern neighbor through the Obama administration. The Mexican cartels are taking advantage of liberal gun ownership laws and smuggle their weapons to Mexico. The president of Mexico and the United States are enforcing the gun control to become tougher, according to BBC.

*Jovanny Soto is a Rogers High School senior. This is his first year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*



Katherine Shurlds, right, former director of the LJP, talks with Hisleny Garcia Campos.

## Film Festival Will Focus on Works by Women

*continued from page 13*

on Earth Film Festival in Chicago and the Festival of Media Arts, said Larry Foley, who is chairman of the Walter J. Lemke Department of Journalism and a documentary filmmaker.

Frank Thurmond, a screenwriter and visiting assistant professor at the University of Arkansas in Little Rock, has had his work showcased at Ozark Foothills Film Fest as well as the Little Rock Film Festival.

"Last year I won first place in the Ozark Foothills Film Festival screenplay competition," he said. "At the same time, Foothills screened my first film, which is the film that my former student Zach Roberson made, titled 'Reconciliation.' It was adapted from my published memoir. That was the first film I had screened.

"I then had a film premier at the Little Rock Film Festival in May of last year, called 'Spymaster,'" Thurmond said. "I have a new film that will be premiered at the Little Rock Film Festival this year."

Northwest Arkansas will get festival exposure. The Bentonville Film Festival this year will focus attention on women and diversity in all aspects of film. The goal is to better represent the growing diversity of the national audience, according to the festival website.

Student filmmakers, including Fayetteville High School senior Emily Field, also have the opportunity to screen their films at festivals. Field has participated in filmmaking classes in her school.

"We've entered lots of ours in

film festivals, and they've been ranked," she said. "One of my documentaries that I made with Hayden Morris and Jasper Mize won first place at the Spring Creek Arts Festival. I would love to have an actual professional film entered in one."

Field has progressed through her filmmaking classes, and now acts as cinematographer for the class.

"As you grow, you improve," Field said. "In the past, it used to be the seniors who would make films. The better they got, the higher the role they got in the film."

Additionally, the Banff Mountain Film Festival will travel to Fayetteville this September, screening multiple films focusing on outdoor adventures. The festival has toured throughout

the United States and Canada to promote adventure filmmakers, according to the festival website.

The diversity in what certain film festivals screen can be attributed to the growing number of people making films, Carpenter said.

"A person used to have to work for a production company to make films," he said. "Now a person can get a camera and editing software and become a filmmaker. There are a lot more people in filmmaking, so there are more specialized film festivals."

The UofA encourages students to enter their films into festivals for screening, Foley said.

"Some students' films are not always accepted, but some are screened at the Hot Springs

festival, the Ozark Foothills Film Fest and the Offshoot Film Fest," Foley said.

Thurmond said he encouraged all aspiring filmmakers to pursue their path.

"All aspects of filmmaking – from writer, to director, to producer, to the actors and music – provide a chance to get discovered," he said. "Submitting short films to festivals provides a way to find an opening in the larger filmmaking world. From my own experience, I had numerous opportunities to just give up and think I would never get anything made, but perseverance is the key."

*Summer Bush is a Fayetteville High School senior. This is her third year in the Lemke Journalism Project.*

