

Club News— Space Center 50 Random Acts of Kindness

San Jacinto College student Melissa Rojas was the surprise recipient of \$1,000 from the Rotary Club of Space Center as part of its 50th Anniversary Celebration “50 Random Acts of Kindness.”

“I was very surprised that day,” said Rojas. “I’m trying so hard to be positive every single day of my life because I learned a long time ago happiness is a decision, so I made that decision a long time ago to be happy, no matter what. And it’s working for me!”

Rojas has plans to one day become a physician’s assistant. She is attending San Jacinto College to complete her basics, and would like to transfer to the University of Texas Medical Branch to earn her bachelor’s degree. Ultimately, she would like to work in a hospital or pediatrician’s office.

When she was invited to attend the Nov. 16 Rotary Club of Space Center luncheon, she thought it was because of her involvement with the San Jacinto College food pantry. The Rotary Club of Space Center held a food drive that day to provide food for the San Jacinto College food pantry. In addition, high school students in the Clear Lake High School Interact Club had collected food instead of treats on Halloween, and donated more than 800 cans of food to the food pantry.

Little did Melissa Rojas know she would leave that event with a little extra money in her pocket, and a story to tell her husband and children. “What gave me Goosebumps was that the high school students contributed to the food pantry,” said Rojas. “That is a goal I want to set for my own children so they can be a part of their community aware-

ness as well.”

Rojas and her husband, Fernando, are actively involved in their community. The couple has two children, and Rojas volunteers at their school and church. The family has fallen on some difficult times lately, and has relied on the San Jacinto College food pantry for assistance. But what’s even more remarkable is that they have also contributed to the pantry as well.

“The women at the San Jacinto College food pantry are so loveable and they make you want to volunteer,” added Rojas. “When we donate to them, it’s to give back because we know there are other families in need as well.” Rojas adds that her children often ask if they can donate extra food they have at the house, or things they are no longer using, to the food pantry or an organization such as Goodwill.

After the Rojas family moved to Houston five years ago, Fernando lost his job in the construction industry. He has since been working various jobs, sometimes keeping him away from his family for several days or weeks. But Rojas has maintained a positive attitude. She understands the importance of working to save money, and tries to instill that in her two children every day.

“My kids know the difference between needs and wants, and they’ll even list them for you if you ask them!” commented Rojas. “I feel that if I instill in them the importance of saving money, as they grow up they will understand that good things come when you least expect it. I tell them to always value the little things.”

As part of the lesson of savings, the Rojas family has a Disney Fund set up in the dining room. They contribute to it whenever they have some pocket change. The Rojas children have even contributed their tooth fairy money to the fund. “The kids have really adapted to saving,” noted Rojas. “They know that a penny saved is a penny earned.”

Rojas was nominated as a recipient of one of Rotary Club of Space Center’s “50 Random Acts of Kindness” by San Jacinto College Vice Chancellor for Marketing, Public Relations, and Government Affairs, Teri Crawford, a Rotary Club of Space Center member.

“Melissa is a remarkable student,” Crawford said. “She is bright, cheerful, and optimistic. She and her family have overcome some difficult times the last couple of years, so in my mind, she was the perfect choice for this donation. I am so incredibly happy for her, and hope it will go a long way for her and her family.”

Rojas says that this donation comes at a great time. It will help her attend classes next semester full-time instead of part-time, bringing her closer to accomplishing her goal of earning an associate degree. “My husband is so supportive of me finishing school,” said Rojas. “I want to make him and my kids proud of



About San Jacinto College

Surrounded by monuments of history, industries and maritime enterprises of today, and the space age of tomorrow, San Jacinto College has been serving the citizens of East Harris County, Texas, for more than 50 years. As an Achieving the Dream Leader College, San Jacinto College is committed to the goals and aspirations of a diverse population of approximately 30,000 credit students. The College offers 186 degrees and certificates, with 46 technical programs and a university transfer division. Students benefit from a support system that maps out a pathway for success, and job training programs that are renowned for meeting the needs of growing industries in the region. San Jacinto College graduates contribute nearly \$690 million each year to the Texas workforce.