

no invitation required

by [elona joine](#)

Reddish brown hair from his wig fell onto his shoulders. Initially uneasy about the situation, he looked in the mirror one last time to make sure his eyeliner, lipstick and blush were in place. Hoping to get a few laughs, senior Christian Rodriguez adjusted his multi-colored dress, once worn by his great grandmother, and made his way to the parking lot filled with bustling chaos.

"Our float was based on 'Hairspray,'" Rodriguez said. "In the newer version, a man plays the mother of the main character. We thought it'd be funny to do the same for our float. My friends nominated me because I'm not shy. I think I turned quite a few heads."

Organizers and spectators noticed there were more floats than in the past. Members of the Corvette club drove their pride and joy on four

wheels down the three mile route, as the feeder pattern school kids showed pride in their schools. Not everyone, however, got to dress up for the celebration.

"I've been in the parade with JROTC every year since I was a freshman," senior Mayra Villalobos said. "As battalion commander, I had to make sure everyone was doing what they were supposed to. It was a little difficult to get everyone to sing the cadences, but once Sgt. [Jose Hernandez] and I told them something, everyone participated."

Participating every year, CDL wagons carrying pint-size Mustangs stole the show, winning the top prize for best organizations float.

"Every wagon is decorated by the child's parents," junior Celeste Saucedo said. "Since some of the parents are former CDL high school students, they went all out. As we walked down the street, I could hear peoples' 'ooos and ahhs,' and it made me smile."

Participants relied on resourcefulness to reinvent iconic scenes, from the fabulous '50s to the rockin' '90s. The annual parade was more like a party, and the community was in on the fun.

Frias makes noise on the field

by [jonathan castro](#)

He sat in a sound proof room waiting for his doctor. It seemed like an eternity. Born with a 60 percent hearing loss in both ears, five-year-old Jorge Frias will soon hear the world in a whole new way.

"As soon as the doctor put Jorge's hearing aids on, he laughed," his mother Albena said. "All of a sudden, he heard new things. I think it was a strange sensation for him. He would react to whatever little noise, but I still remember his laugh. He seemed so much happier after that."

Today, Jorge is a junior. He plays football and runs track. His father, Rey said he is proud of all that his son has accomplished.

"We let him be," Rey said. "We raised him like any other kid. He was still punished and yelled at. We never told him he couldn't do something because of his disability. I did notice he would get frustrated at the smallest things. I thought having an outlet to vent that frustration would be good. I told him football or karate. He chose football, so we put him on a city team. We pushed him to push himself. I think his disability has also pushed him. He knows he has a disadvantage, so he has to work harder than the other kids."

That is exactly what Jorge has done. Last season, he led the varsity football team in rushing with over 800 yards. He was also chosen District 1-5A's "Newcomer of the Year."

"I started playing nine years ago," Jorge said. "I've never been the biggest guy, but I work hard in the summer to get strong. I also

have friends on the team who helped me with plays. Odell [Graham] helped me by signing plays to me."

Although his hearing aids help, Jorge prefers not using them.

"The noise gives me headaches," he said. "I wear them at school to hear better, but when I go home I take them off. I also don't wear them for football. It's just too loud."

For the past three years, Ken Kurita has served as Jorge's interpreter. The two have grown close.

"I've always told Jorge that he has to push himself because of his size, and he has," Kurita said. "I have such a strong connection to him because he is like me. I too have a hearing disability. I don't want him to have to go through the hardships I had to go through."

In the classroom, Jorge experienced difficulties at a young age.

"Today his hearing disability doesn't really affect his classwork," Albena said. "When he was younger, it was really difficult for him. He has speech therapists and interpreters now to help him if he needs it."

Despite his disability, Jorge insists he's just like any other teen. He plans to play college football. He has sparked interest from a college in Washington.

"I hope to play in the NFL one day," he said. "Coach [Marcus] Graham told me I can get a football scholarship. That's my goal. My disability doesn't mean anything. Most of the time, I hang out with non-deaf people. I'm just like anyone else."

cured on canvas

by jordan steyer

Ramon Mendoza loads up his backpack each morning with all the essentials—his laptop, a couple of pens, and a binder. But he also grabs a bag filled with the essentials of hope. It's a bag full of artist supplies and a large poster of his latest work.

It wasn't always like this.

"In 2013, I ended up in a mental hospital," he said. "I tried to commit suicide. While I was there, I started seeing an image that I now produce whenever people are feeling bad. They're called 'the struggles' or 'les lutes.' They're meant to symbolize the light at the end of the tunnel, but it really depends on what the viewer sees."

Guadalupe Mendoza, Ramon's mother, has always been supportive of her son wanting to help others.

"He uses his art to express himself," Guadalupe said. "It's his therapy. There are times when he will go into his room and close himself from the world, but I know that he is drawing. He is relieving

his stress. I'm proud because if it makes him happy, it makes me happy."

Senior Dominique Huerta started noticing Mendoza's art when he brought some of the pieces to school.

"What makes him an artist is the story behind what he is doing," Huerta said. "Anyone can draw. If you have a reason to do it, it makes it special. Ramon wants everyone to know that someone is there for you. Ramon is saying that you're never alone."

Ramon, who wants to pursue an art related profession, never wants the message to be about him. He wants it to be about the people who see his art.

"You can't see depression, or bipolar disorder," he said, "but I want to give them a face. I'm trying to help people by putting an image to a mental issue. If someone talks about it, they might go and get help."

inexperience hits home

by jonathan castro

He hates to lose. Senior Matthew Salazar sits in his grey Ford Escape, still in his baseball uniform. He replays the past three hours in his head before heading home. He tries to figure out how the team found itself on the losing end of a one-sided affair against the Canutillo Eagles.

"I'm not used to this," Salazar said. "I've been on varsity since my freshman year. We've won the district championship all my three years prior to this one. We had the second best team in Burges history. Now, we can hardly win a game. The issue is experience. The team has none."

The team lost 12 players to graduation, then lost one of its only two returning players. The team didn't claim its first victory until halfway through the district season. The Mustangs handed it to the Irvin Rockets 14-4. Like Salazar, sophomore Pedro Schlosser attributed the slow start to lack of experience.

"We are a young team," Schlosser said. "Most of us are sophomores. We lost early in the season because we had missing pieces. Our offense wasn't great. We hardly had any hits. We improved as the season went on. That's because we practiced batting. Since we're so young, we are not at a varsity level yet. We're still building to that."

Alex Peña, now in his second year as head coach, was aware his team had a target on its back. The entire baseball community knew the Mustangs had strung together three district championships and were the team to beat.

"We just continued to come out to practice and improve every day," Peña said. "It was tough with so many young players on the varsity squad. We were in a tough position, but it's always possible to turn it around. I just tried to make them relax and have fun—take some of the pressure off."

three challenging miles

by celeen atkins

Scorching summer heat beat down on junior Audrina Rosales-Streeter as she made her way down what seemed to be a never-ending trail. Tumbleweeds lined both sides of the race path. Gritty sand made every step feel as if she were running in and out of quicksand. Located near the Socorro Activities Complex, the grueling course with its steep hills added at least five minutes to her and her teammates' times.

"I had never run in the desert before," Rosales-Streeter, a third-year runner, said. "Although it was just a practice meet, it was more difficult than any race I had ever taken part in. The course pushed me to my limit. It was a lot tougher than the grass courses I was used to. I didn't know what was coming until I turned a corner, and when I did it was just more desert. I was able to push myself further, and it prepared me when district came around."

While Rosales-Streeter turned an obstacle into an asset, senior Andy Perez faced his own uphill climb. After sitting out the previous season because of a foot injury, Perez was ready to show what he could do. The only senior with experience, Perez improved his times and earned a spot to travel out of town. In Abilene, Perez ran into trouble, and it wasn't the competition. Less than halfway into the race, Perez felt something jabbing his left foot. He continued running, keeping his thoughts on the finish line.

"A rock sliced right through my shoe," Perez said. "I could feel it, but it didn't really cause me that much pain. It was more discomfort and it slowed me down. I went through the rest of my race with the rock piercing the bottom of my foot, but I knew I had to finish what I started. When I approached the end of the race, the pain was intense. I took off my shoe and my sock was soaked in blood. I was a little disappointed because I couldn't give it my all, but I was proud of myself for being able to push through to finish the race."