



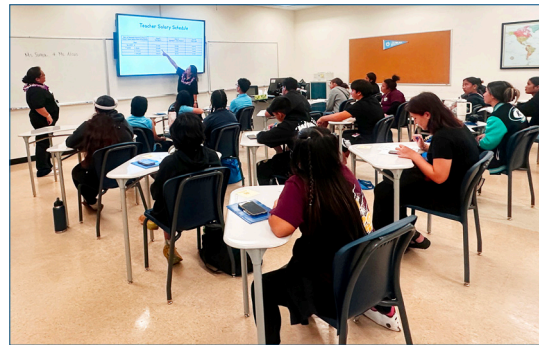
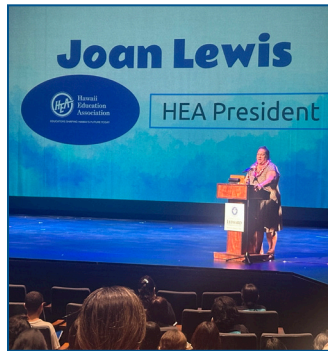
## Annual Dive Into Education Event

# Inspiring the Next Generation of Educators

**T**he best way to learn about something is to dive right in. That's exactly what more than 200 high school students from a dozen public schools did! They gathered for the third annual "Dive Into Education" event ready to learn more about the teaching profession from Hawai'i educators. The event, held at Leeward Community College on Nov. 21, also included a college and career fair.

The event was planned and coordinated by **Tammy Yoon**, a teacher at Pearl City High School for the past 20 years, and **Daphne Okunaga**, an instructional strategist with Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education. Hawai'i Education Association (HEA) was the lead sponsor of the event, thanks to State of Hawai'i grant-in-aid funds. The Hawai'i Department of Education, Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education, Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board, Hawai'i State Teachers Association, and the University of Hawai'i system provided in-kind contributions and volunteer support.

Students came from Campbell High School, Farrington High School, Kailua High School, Kalani High School, Leilehua High School, Mililani High School, Pearl City High School, and Waipahu High School on O'ahu; Maui High School in Kahului, and Konawaena High School in



*Clockwise, from top left: HEA President Joan Kamila Lewis welcomes students to the Dive Into Education event; students had an opportunity to meet with representatives from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, UH West O'ahu, Honolulu Community College, Kapi'olani Community College, Leeward Community College, and Chaminade University at a college and career fair; Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke shares how teachers shaped her life; and a breakout session on teacher salaries, presented by Kapolei High School educators.*

Kealahou, in Kona and Honoka'a High and Intermediate School on Hawai'i Island. These schools all participate in the Teaching as a Profession program or have Educators Rising clubs.

HEA President **Joan Kamila Lewis** welcomed the students and introduced keynote speaker **Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke** who shared how she came to Hawai'i from South

Korea when she was nine years old and didn't know any English. She recalled how her teachers helped to mentor her, and a science teacher at Roosevelt High School inspired her to learn more about fruit flies and DNA.

Each student had the opportunity to participate in breakout sessions on topics to help students prepare for their teaching careers.

**2025-2026  
Board of Directors**

**President**

Joan Kamila Lewis

**Vice President**

Jonathon Medeiros

**Treasurer**

Wilbur Luna

**Directors**

Piliialoha Lee Loy

Meredith Maeda

June Motokawa

Jacqueline Yanagi

**Staff**

**Executive Director**

Laurie Togami

**Program Manager**

Lynn Hammonds, Ed.D.

**Membership Clerk/Receptionist**

Normita Agustin

**Our Vision**

To affirm the professionalism of  
Hawaii's educators.

**Our Mission**

To strengthen excellence in education:

- Advocate teaching as a profession.
- Support pre-service and in-service educators.
- Advance professional learning for effective teaching.

**Hawaii Education Association**

1953 South Beretania Street, Suite 5C  
Honolulu, HI 96826

Tel: 808.949.6657

Fax: 808.944.2032

hea.office@hawaiieducationassociation.org



**A Message from the President:  
Greetings from the School Zone!**

**Aloha!** As we enter the heart of the holiday season, I ask your indulgence for this end of the calendar year message...



Several years ago, the Hawai'i Department of Education began developing what might have been a replacement for the DOE's General Learner Outcomes (GLOs). Although the GLOs had been widely used throughout the DOE, there was a belief that learning outcomes from Hawai'i should reflect the very best of Hawai'i. To that end, members of the Board of Education as well as DOE staff members (including staff from the DOE's Office of Hawaiian Education) worked with other stakeholder groups to develop what would become Na Hopena A'o.

Na Hopena A'o focuses on the acronym, BREATH which speaks to the strengthening of one's sense of Belonging, Responsibility, Excellence, Aloha, Total Well Being, and Hawai'i. The Hawaiian word for breath is Hā, and this is how most who are familiar with Na Hopena A'o refer to it.

The final creation, Hā, had such sweeping implications, the DOE did not replace the GLOs, but rather has been working to have the Hā framework go far beyond expectations for students, staff and schools. In short, Hā should be the framework used not only in our schools, but also in our communities, our businesses, our government, and our daily lives.

While I'm not sure that we have succeeded in making Hā common knowledge, I have found that the profoundness of this work lives in its simplicity: when we strengthen our belonging to our people and our community, we share a responsibility to them. When we strengthen our responsibility, we work to fulfill this with excellence. If we are all trying to fulfill our responsibility with excellence, it helps us feel aloha for and aloha from those to whom we belong. This supports our individual and collective total well being, and as we are island people, this supports the essence of being from Hawai'i. All the pieces fit together, and all are dynamic in that we are always needing to strengthen each and all. If any part of our BREATH is lacking, we cannot sustain ourselves. Hā is not just necessary for life, it is necessary to live our best lives.

The "Hopena" in Na Hopena A'o always stood out to me because the only other time I had seen that name was when my nephew was born. Fullerton Hopena Kahui Pokipala embodied the essence of Hā throughout his life. Unfortunately, he died earlier this year, and it was only at his celebration of life that I fully realized this delightful soul had been a living example of how to live with Hā.

Beyond our family, he belonged to so many communities that it is hard to name them all. In each and every one, it was clear that he understood his responsibilities and fulfilled them with excellence. Given all the stories that have been shared about him, his aloha to one and all was always easy to feel. He made his commitment to living fully and maintaining his total well being look easy, and based on outreach from people around the world, he was quite an ambassador of Hawai'i. At his service, the kahu spoke about how one's life may have a fixed beginning date and a fixed end date, but the dash between the two is what matters most. I believe that for all of us, that dash is our Hā. How we use each breath and how we live with BREATH matters. Hopena's breath may have ended, but his Hā lives on in all of us who were gifted with his presence in our lives.

May you continue to find ways to strengthen your Hā for now and always.

Sincerely,

**Joan Kamila Lewis**

BOARD PRESIDENT

## Congratulations!

# Eleven Susan Hagiwara Scholarship Recipients

**S**pecial education teachers cannot be thanked enough for their commitment to nurturing special education students and helping them realize their full potential.

The HEA Susan Hagiwara Special Education Teacher Micro Grant Program is making sure special education teachers receive the recognition they deserve. Named in honor of long-time special education teacher **Susan Hagiwara**—who embodied perseverance, joy, and optimism in the face of challenging work—the program continues her legacy by empowering educators who share her commitment.

HEA awarded its first Susan Hagiwara scholarships of up to \$500 each to 11 inspiring special education teachers for improving student learning and well-being.

Congratulations to this year's recipients: **Sarah Dennis, Elston Fujimoto, Chrystie Isaacs, Bibiana Ivie, Iona Kaai, Maluhia Kekuawela, Stephanie Keseday, Vera McCabe-Silva, Elizabeth Short, Daniel Simeon, and Natasha Skaltsas.**

These educators were selected for their thoughtful, innovative, and purposeful project proposals. Each recipient shared how the micro grant will help bring their ideas to life at their respective schools, fostering meaningful learning experiences for special education students in their respective communities.

### **Sarah Dennis**

#### **Makaha Elementary School**

Sarah Dennis' Lei of Aloha project



Sarah Dennis



Elston Fujimoto



Chrystie Isaacs



Bibiana Ivie



Iona Kaai



Maluhia Kekuawela



Stephanie Keseday



Vera McCabe-Silva



Elizabeth Short



Daniel Simeon



Natasha Skaltsas

helps kindergarten special education students practice kindness, communication, and fine motor skills by creating monthly leis and gratitude messages. Activities build social-emotional growth, expressive language, confidence, and connection to the school community.

### **Elston Fujimoto** **Wilson Elementary School**

Elston Fujimoto will strengthen early literacy and numeracy in an inclusion kindergarten class through targeted small-group instruction. Leveled readers, phonics games,

and interactive tools will support differentiated learning, boost engagement, and build academic and social confidence for all students.

### **Chrystie Isaacs** **Moanalua Elementary School**

Chrystie Isaacs will create a flexible seating classroom to improve engagement, focus, and inclusion. By offering diverse seating options tailored to students' learning and sensory needs, she aims to boost collaboration, reduce distractions, and foster a dynamic environment

*(continued on page 4)*

## Congratulations!

# Eleven Susan Hagiwara Scholarship Recipients

*(continued from page 3)*

that supports academic success and student empowerment.

### **Bibiana Ivie**

#### **West Hawaii Exploration Academy**

Bibiana Ivie will enhance inclusive, hands-on science learning through field trips, investigations, and differentiated lessons on sustainability, biology, energy, and wildfire science. Her Fire on Land project engages students in exploring wildfire causes and community response, building real-world skills, confidence, and connections to local environmental resilience.

### **Iona Kaai**

#### **Makaha Elementary School**

Iona Kaai's Life on the 'Āina project engages fourth graders in place-based science and social studies. Through weekly farm visits, students study plant and animal structures, practice sustainability, create 'āina-based products, and build problem-solving, environmental stewardship, and Career and Technical Education skills.

### **Maluhia Kekuawela**

#### **Ha'aheo Elementary School**

Maluhia Kekuawela will revitalize the school's Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports store with high-quality rewards to boost positive behavior, reduce disciplinary referrals, and increase student engagement. Collaboration with staff, the Parent Teacher Organization, and student leaders will support a more respectful, responsible school culture.

### **Stephanie Keseday**

#### **Maui Waena Intermediate School**

Stephanie Keseday will take two to three college science courses to strengthen her content expertise and improve instruction in her special education resource classroom. The grant supports her goal of enhancing science teaching through deeper subject knowledge and updated best practices.

### **Vera McCabe-Silva**

#### **Kahului Elementary School**

Vera McCabe-Silva will provide fourth- and fifth-grade students with diverse, culturally relevant books—especially Hawai'i-based titles. With personal copies for each student, her project boosts comprehension, critical thinking, engagement, and equity, supported by related classroom visuals and activities.

### **Daniel Simeon**

#### **'Ewa Makai Middle School**

Daniel Simeon will provide a restaurant-style learning experience where special education students practice table manners, etiquette, and social skills. His general

education students will prepare and serve farm-to-table meals, giving all students real-world practice in cooking, serving, communication, and confidence-building.

### **Elizabeth Short**

#### **Hickam Elementary School**

Elizabeth Short will develop a themed dramatic play center for Early Childhood Special Education students. Seasonal setups like a pumpkin patch or post office will support Individualized Education Program goals through play-based learning, enhancing communication, literacy, math, cooperation, and independence.

### **Natasha Skaltsas**

#### **Ewa Makai Middle School**

Natasha Skaltsas will implement hands-on cooking projects that build functional reading, math, and collaboration skills for sixth graders. Aligned with Individualized Education Program goals, activities foster independence, cultural learning, and confidence, with progress measured through ongoing assessments.

## Celebrating Rough Rider Excellence!



Roosevelt High School recently honored HEA board member June Motokawa and other distinguished alumni at the school's 95th

Anniversary & Hall of Fame Induction on October 25, 2025.

Congratulations to June!

## Save the Date!

2026 HEA Teacher Summit  
January 14, 2026

Laniākea — YWCA O'ahu  
1040 Richards Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

For more information, contact  
Lynn Hammonds, Ed.D,  
HEA Program Manager, at  
lhammonds@  
hawaiieducationassociation.org

# HEA Hosts 2025 Teacher Symposium

By Lynn Hammonds, Ed.D  
HEA Program Manager

**H**EA welcomed public school educators from across the islands for the 2025 HEA Teacher Symposium at Kapolei High School on November 4, 2025. It was a day of professional learning dedicated to strengthening ethical practice in the teaching profession.

The event brought together teachers from six high schools statewide, four Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs), representatives from the Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA) and the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB), alongside HEA President **Joan Kamila Lewis**, Executive Director **Laurie Togami**, and Program Manager **Dr. Lynn Hammonds** for a meaningful convening.

The symposium centered on Hawai'i's instructional integration of the second edition of the Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE) with high school students enrolled in education pathways and clubs.

To guide this work, HEA featured virtual keynote presenter **Dr. Troy Hutchings**, the nation's leading expert on educator ethics and Senior Policy Advisor at NASDTEC. His presentation, "Protection • Prevention • Purpose: Professional Ethics and the Model Code of Ethics for Educators," served as the foundation for the day's learning.

Dr. Hutchings shared scenario-based learning strategies that engage students in applying professional norms, evaluating risks, and understanding contextual variables as they begin to observe and work with other students in a classroom as an aspiring educator.



*The 2025 HEA Teacher Symposium held in early November was a fun, productive day of learning from each other.*



Teachers received resources to support classroom instruction aligned to the new edition of the MCEE, including guidance on how to introduce the code in their courses and clubs.

A major outcome of the symposium is support for teachers as their students study the code as part of their preparation to enter the teaching profession, building early habits of defensible decision-making and professional conduct.

This is particularly important as Hawai'i students participate in the Educators Rising Ethical Dilemma Competition, a national event sponsored by EdRising, that challenges future educators to analyze real-world ethical scenarios. The dilemmas change annually and reflect current, relevant issues, mirroring the scenario-based strategies Dr. Hutchings demonstrated during the symposium.

Hawai'i students have the option to compete in the state-level Ethical Dilemma Competition in early 2026.

State champions will advance to the Educators Rising National Conference, scheduled for June 20–23, 2026, in Portland, Oregon, under the theme "Teach with Purpose, Lead with Passion."

Throughout the day, participants reaffirmed a shared commitment to preparing the next generation of Hawai'i's educators with strong ethical grounding. The collaboration among HEA, HTSB, HSTA, local high schools, and Hawai'i's EPPs underscores a vision of ensuring that future teachers enter the profession prepared with strong instructional skills and with the ethical understanding needed to serve Hawai'i's keiki and communities.

HEA looks forward to continued support across the state for teachers as they work with aspiring educators in Hawai'i high schools. The 2025 symposium marked a significant step forward in strengthening Hawai'i's educator pathways and elevating the professional standards that define the teaching profession.

# HEA Awards Five HSTA-Retired Grants

**F**ive exceptional teachers whose work directly enriches the lives of their students recently received HEA HSTA-Retired grants.

Congratulations to this year's recipients: **Chassidy Kaaihue**, **Jacie Miyashiro**, **Curtis Ogi**, **Joy Paul**, and **Adrienne Yanke**.

These educators were selected for this grant because of their commitment to advancing their training and strengthening their professional practice. Each recipient explained how the grant will support their continued growth and development.

## **Chassidy Kaaihue** University of Hawaii Mānoa – Reading Interventionist Program



Chassidy Kaaihue, a special education teacher at Kamaile Academy Public Charter School, is

participating in UH Mānoa's Reading Interventionist Program to become a Certified Structured Literacy Dyslexia Specialist. This training enhances expertise in evidence-based literacy interventions, structured literacy, and multi-sensory instruction. With nine years of teaching experience, she aims to support students with reading difficulties, close learning gaps, and serve as a resource for colleagues, giving back to her Wai'anae community.

## **Jacie Miyashiro** University of Hawaii at Mānoa – M.A., English



Jacie Miyashiro is an exemplary English teacher at Aiea High School with eight years of experience, known for

creating supportive, student-centered classrooms that build confidence and engagement. She designs inclusive, culturally responsive lessons connecting literature to real-world issues, mentors colleagues, leads initiatives like HSTA CARES, and recently earned National Board Certification. Jacie is recognized for her dedication, professionalism, leadership, and "Teacher's Heart," making her a highly respected educator and valuable asset to any educational program.

## **Curtis Ogi – Spalding University – M.Ed., Learner-Centered Practices**



In his third year teaching AP Language and Composition, Curtis Ogi, an English teacher at Mililani High School, aims to make the course

more accessible while maintaining rigor. With larger enrollment than other schools, he focuses on learner-centered practices to reduce the elitist stigma of AP classes and provide opportunities for students who might not otherwise consider them.

## **Joy Paul** Institute for Multi-Sensory Education – International Dyslexia Accreditation



Joy Paul, a third-grade teacher at Holualoha Elementary School, is taking three courses at the Institute for Multi-Sensory

Education: Orton-Gillingham Plus, Morphology Plus, and Fidelity Training. These courses are the first steps toward full Orton-Gillingham Certification. This training in Structured Literacy will enhance instruction in her classroom and English Language Arts block, support schoolwide literacy initiatives, and allow her to share strategies with colleagues.

## **Adrienne Yanke** University of Hawaii at Mānoa – Ph.D., Curriculum & Instruction



Farrington High School teacher Adrienne Yanke's PhD work focuses on improving math outcomes for English learners and

Pacific Islander students, who score far below proficiency statewide and at Farrington High School. After creating EL-specific math courses, she now supports two cohorts from pre-algebra through geometry using culturally relevant, language-focused instruction. Her PhD work will help develop shareable, standards-based math lessons that better support multilingual learners.

# In Memoriam

As 2025 comes to close, we pause to remember the members of our HEA community who have passed away. Their commitment to education and contributions enriched our shared work, and their legacy continues in the lives they influenced.

We extend our deepest sympathy to their families and loved ones, and we remember them with gratitude, respect, and fondness. They will always remain in our hearts.

Charles W. Amor  
Lillian Y. Asahi  
Judith Y. Asamoto  
Nancy T. Asaoka  
Robert F. Bean  
Elizabeth Bowman  
Carol P. Britton  
Stanley W. H. Chung  
Vilma K. Y. Dung  
Allen Emura  
Chiaki Eta

Glenn D. Fernandez  
Elaine K. Foo Sum  
Marie S. P. Fujii  
Evelyn L. Fukumae  
Beatrice O. Hahn  
Eleanor Y. Hayashi  
Toshio Higa  
Violet T. Hiranaka  
Betsy T. Hirayama  
Catherine Hironaka

Ronald Y. Honda  
Naomi K. Hong  
Dorothy A. Hosoda  
Irene Emiko Igawa  
Stanley Ishiyama  
Lillian M. Ito  
Daniel D. Izuka  
Allen K. Kajikawa

Frances Kanekiyo  
Rokuichi Kanekuni  
Donald S. Karimoto  
Delano Kawahara  
James Y. S. Kim  
Roy K. Kimura  
Irvin L. King  
Kenneth S. Kobuke  
Hisao Komae  
Ronald K. Kurokawa  
Mildred Kutsunai  
Mildred C. Lau  
James R. Little

Harold H. P. Look  
Juliette Y. N. Lum  
Jane K. Matsumoto  
Merle M. Matsuyama  
Linda Mew  
Yoshiharu Mikami  
Leocadia Miyajima  
Kiyoto Mizuba  
Amy H. Mizuno  
T. Martha Morita  
Takeshi Moriwaki  
Pamela T. Mossman  
Michiko Motooka  
Grace S. Murata  
Michael M. Nakano  
Hiroshi Nishida  
Michiko F. Nishida  
Betty K. Nishikawa  
Roy M. Nishioka  
Sueko K. Oguro  
Grace Y. Okamura  
Jane K. Pang

Violet Y. Sahara  
Amy I. Saito  
Erillee Takabayashi  
Edwin S. O. A. Tam  
Katsuko H. Tang  
Sally Sadako Tanji  
Thelma K. Tarumoto  
Henry K. Tominaga  
George T. Tomonaga  
Kazue Ueda  
Setsuo Ushio  
Jane T. Uyehara  
Jane T. Wakukawa  
James R. Wills, Jr.  
Jane Yamashiroya  
Alma Yogi  
Patricia A. Yoshikawa  
Victoria A. Yoshimura  
Kelvin K. K. Young  
Linda N. Y. Yuen  
Bernice S. Y. Zane

## Brochure Contest Winners

**Teacher Prep Programs**  
Future teachers can prepare through teacher education programs offered at colleges and universities statewide. This includes:  
UH Manoa  
UH West Oahu  
UH Hilo & its Kahuawalaia program  
Leeward Community College  
BYU Hawai'i  
Chaminade University  
Hawaii Pacific University

**Vision & Mission**  
The Hawaii Education Association is a 501(c)(3) professional organization for teachers and friends of Education.  
**Vision**  
To affirm the professionalism of Hawaii educators  
**Mission**  
To strengthen and support excellence in education by:  
• Advocating teaching as a profession  
• Awarding scholarships for pre-service and in-service educators  
• Advancing professional learning for effective teaching

**Contact Us Today!**  
The Hawaii Education Association  
1963 South Beresiana Street,  
Suite 5C  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96826  
Telephone: 949-6657

**Be the Future of Education in Hawaii!**  
Unlocking potential through learning.

**Practical Benefits**  
• Job Security: Education is always in demand  
• Personal Growth: Learn and grow while employed  
• Support children's growth and development during their early years

**Support children's growth and development during their early years**  
School-to-scholarship pathway  
Provide academic support, career counseling, and financial aid

**Congratulations to Mililani High School students, who swept the HEA contests to design Teaching As A Career brochures for middle and high school students! The contests were open to all schools that participate in CTE Education Pathways or have Teaching As a Career Clubs.**

**Kristen Kenney** designed the winning brochure for high school students, and **Jaelyn Mamiya** and **Ayden Felipe** designed the winning brochure for middle school students. At the recent Dive Into Education event, **Laurie Togami**, HEA Executive Director, and **Lynn Hammonds, Ed.D**, Program Manager, presented the students and their advisor, **Stephanie A Grande-Misaki**, with \$500 for their teaching programs. The funds were part of a State of Hawai'i grant-in-aid grant.



**Hawaii  
Education  
Association**

EDUCATORS SHAPING HAWAII'S FUTURE TODAY

1953 South Beretania Street, Suite 5C  
Honolulu, HI 96826

## Follow Us on Social Media!



@hawaiieducationassociation



@hawaiieducation



@HawaiiEducAssn



linkedin.com/company/hawaii-education-association

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
HONOLULU, HI  
PERMIT NO. 633

# Hawai'i Educators Explore Global Learning in Costa Rica

This past summer, Hawai'i educators **Jonathon Medeiros** of Kaua'i High School and **Laura Cummings** of Ka'ōhāo Public Charter School participated in an inspiring field study in Costa Rica as part of the NEA Foundation's Global Learning Fellowship. The field study abroad was the culmination of a year-long professional collaboration with about 50 outstanding educators from across the United States.

Costa Rica was an ideal focus and location for this global learning field study for many reasons. The country provides universal education and healthcare, has set aside 35% of its land as protected areas (much of which is managed as national park lands), and 98% of Costa Rica's energy consumption comes from renewable energy. It is also home to one of the world's five Blue Zones and the UN-established University for Peace.

While in Costa Rica, the NEA Foundation Global Learning Fellows were immersed in the local culture. They explored the country's public education system, visiting schools and education institutions.

They had the opportunity to meet with Costa Rican students, teachers, and administrators to better understand shared challenges and innovative approaches. The two Hawai'i educators were also able to share their own experiences, projects, and strategies with each other and the rest of the educators.

Each fellow completed a capstone project applying learning and ideas from the coursework, webinar discussions, and field study—all aimed at answering the question: "How do we create global experiences in our classrooms?" These final learning products, centered around their own students' needs and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, will be shared online by the NEA Foundation.

For more information about the fellowship or application process, visit the NEA Foundation's Global Learning Fellowship site. For more questions about global education in Hawai'i or to collaborate, please contact: [Jonathon.Medeiros@k12.hi.us](mailto:Jonathon.Medeiros@k12.hi.us) or Cummings at [LCummings@kaohaoschool.org](mailto:LCummings@kaohaoschool.org).



*NEA Foundation participants at Arenal Volcano National Park, Costa Rica. Photo by tour guide Patricia Alfaro.*



*Laura Cummings, Jonathon Medeiros, and high school students who took them on a tour of their school, Colegio Tecnico Profesional De Puriscal. Photo by Laura Cummings.*