

# TALENT PUT IN SPOTLIGHT FILM FESTIVAL DRAWS ATTENTION TO SAN FERNANDO PROGRAM.(Valley News)

From: Daily News (Los Angeles, CA) Date: August 23, 2006

**Daily News** Byline: RICK COCA Valley News Writer

Combining the craft of filmmaking with a sense of community and social awareness, young participants of the San Fernando Education Technology Team recently premiered more than 35 films at the seventh annual ICAN Festival de Cine.

The technology team, started at San Fernando High School by former computer graphics teacher Marco Torres, has given young people access to computers, advanced software and film and music technology they might not otherwise have.

Elizabeth Ruvalcaba, 20, of San Fernando followed her sister Rosa into the program.

A sociology and Spanish major at the University of California at Berkeley, she hopes for a career in film editing and said Torres' program and encouragement have changed her life.

"I was really shy," Ruvalcaba said about those early years in the program. Torres "pushed me into a leadership position."

Ruvalcaba said group members are cognizant of the community and have tried to promote it with films on events in and around the city, such as the Cesar Chavez march, the Christmas parade and the recent Blessing of the Cars at Hansen Dam.

"We like to inform people that there's a lot going on here, that they don't have to go out of the community, that this community has a lot to offer," she said.

A couple of years back, Ruvalcaba and her sister Rosa created "Ham and Eggs," a documentary about their uncle's struggle with the English language as a newly arrived immigrant from Mexico.

"He came to San Francisco, and he didn't know any English," Ruvalcaba said. "So he used to have coffee and doughnuts. And (one day) he heard someone say, 'Ham and eggs.'"

And thus began his understanding of English.

At Berkeley, Ruvalcaba, no longer shy, said she often asks her professors to let her make a mini-film for her classroom presentations.

"I get more attention because people would much rather see a film than a PowerPoint presentation," Ruvalcaba said. "Occasionally, (a professor) will ask for a copy of the film and use it for class."

Another team participant who came away with more than he thought possible is David Pena, 19, of Pacoima. Pena is studying music education at the College of the Canyons

and plays a multitude of instruments.

When the opportunity came to produce original music for the technology team, Pena stepped right in and has composed music for projects in various musical styles.

Two years ago, Rubicela Ochoa chronicled Pena's quest to record mariachi music in "Mariachi Me Myself and I," in which Pena played every instrument.

"I (recorded) like 26 tracks," Pena said. "I played the guitar, the vihuela, the guitarron, the trumpet, the violin and (sang) the vocals."

For information on the San Fernando Education Technology Team or the ICAN Festival de Cine, go to [www.sfett.com](http://www.sfett.com).

CAPTION(S):

2 photos

Photo:

(1 -- 2) Participants, left, aim at making films that matter for the ICAN Festival de Cine. With two screens up, far left, a large crowd enjoys the ICAN Festival de Cine, which highlights the works of the San Fernando Education Technology Team.

Marco Torres/Special to the Valley News

COPYRIGHT 2006 Daily News. This material is published under license from the publisher through the Gale Group, Farmington Hills, Michigan. All inquiries regarding rights should be directed to the Gale Group. For permission to reuse this article, contact [Copyright Clearance Center](#).

HighBeam™ Research, Inc. © Copyright 2007. All rights reserved.

[www.highbeam.com](http://www.highbeam.com)